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With hundreds stranded in Sao Paulo, India to broach topic with Brazil Minister

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Mauro Vieira

With Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira landing here on Sunday, India may raise with him the plight of hundreds of men and women, many of them Indians, stranded at an airport in Sao Paulo, Brazil as they are suspected to be undocumented immigrants.

Mr. Vieira is here to hold the ninth India-Brazil Joint Commission meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. They will also discuss the agenda for the G-20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro on November 18 and 19, the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement announcing the visit.

While Brazil's new regulations to crackdown on illegal immigration routes and the issue of more than 660 people, including more than 100 Indians, being held in Sao Paulo's Guarulhos Airport for several weeks, are not on the formal agenda, officials expect that they will be raised.

"We have seen reports of people stranded who ask to be admitted [to Brazil] as refugees," said a source, adding that no information has been shared with New Delhi for privacy reasons and to protect those requesting asylum.

On August 22, Brazil's Justice Ministry also announced it would impose new restrictions on travellers from "certain Asian countries" who transit through its airports beginning August 26, and will not allow them to stay in Brazil.

The measure is expected to target Indian, Chinese, Nepalese and Vietnamese citizens in particular, who are believed to be part of a growing trend of illegal immigrants landing and requesting asylum, and then taking the land route from Brazil to the Mexican border with the United States in order to cross over to the U.S. and Canada.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, the number of such "asylum applications" has increased 61 times between 2013 and 2023, growing from 69 to 4,239.

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Attacking Hezbollah, Israel fighter jets bomb Lebanon

Military calls it pre-emptive strike as the Iran-backed militant group launches attack across border to avenge the killing of one of its top commanders; situation has not escalated but remains tense

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

Israel launched a wave of air strikes across southern Lebanon early on Sunday in what it said was a pre-emptive strike to avert a large Hezbollah attack. The militant group responded that it had launched hundreds of rockets and drones to avenge the killing of one of its top commanders last month.

The heavy exchange of fire does not appear to have ignited a long-feared war, but the situation remains tense. Egypt was meanwhile hosting high-level talks aimed at brokering a ceasefire in the 10-month-old Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, which diplomats hope will tamp down regional tensions.

Air attack: Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli air strike on Zibqin in southern Lebanon on Sunday. AFP

The Israeli military said it struck because Hezbollah was planning to launch a heavy barrage of rockets and missiles. Soon after, Hezbollah said it had launched an attack on Israeli military positions as an initial response to the killing of Fouad Shukur in an Israeli air strike.

By mid-morning, it appeared that the exchange had ended, with both sides saying they had only aimed at military targets. While at least three fighters were killed in the strikes on Lebanon, the Israeli military said one soldier with its navy was killed.

'Determined to defend'

"We are determined to do everything to defend our country, to return the residents of the north securely to their homes and to continue upholding a simple rule: whoever harms us, we will harm them," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

Air-raid sirens were reported throughout northern Israel, and the country's Ben-Gurion International Airport closed and diverted flights for about an hour. Israel's Home Front Command raised the alert level across northern Israel before later lifting restrictions in most areas.

Hezbollah said its attack involved more than 320 Katyusha rockets and a "large number" of drones.

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NEARBY

Air-conditioned underground market opened

BENGALURU
The BBMP on Sunday opened the city's first air-conditioned underground market at Vijayanagar. » Page 2

Govt. sticks to its stand of holding KAS prelims

BENGALURU
The Congress and the BJP stuck to their views on holding the KAS gazetted probationers' preliminary examination that is scheduled to be held on Tuesday even as some of the candidates, who resorted to protests, were taken into custody on Sunday. » Page 6

EDUCATION PLUS » PAGE 5

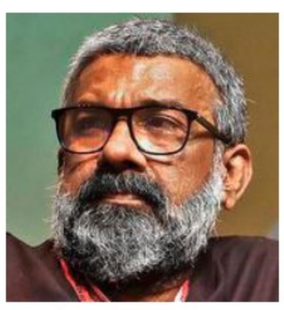
Blushing trees

Wholesome Kashmir: Workers harvest juicy, sun-ripened Kashmiri apples at an orchard at Handwara on Sunday as the season starts. PTI

Big names quit; SIT formed to probe sexual abuse in Malayalam filmdom

S.R. Praveen
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Siddique


Ranjith

The Justice K. Hema committee's report on the issues faced by women in Malayalam films continued to rock the industry, as Sunday witnessed the exits of two high-profile men holding important positions.

The State government, under pressure from the Opposition and the film industry, set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT), including senior women police officers, to conduct a preliminary inquiry into sexual harassment allegations made against several actors.

Actor Siddique quit as the general secretary of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) following allegations of sexual assault levelled by a young actor, while Kerala State Chalachitra Academy Chairperson Ranjith submitted his resignation after Bengali actor Sreelekha Mitra accused him of inappropriate behaviour.

The debates sparked in the public sphere by the release of the report appeared to have emboldened many women to speak out about harrowing experiences they have had in the past. Over the past couple of days, quite a few women, including Ms. Mitra and the young actor, have come out with allegations against actors and filmmakers.

Mr. Siddique confirmed to *The Hindu* that he had submitted his resignation letter to actor Mohanlal, the president of AMMA, in light of the allegations against him.

"I submitted the resignation voluntarily since it is inappropriate to continue in that position when I am facing such an allegation. No one demanded my resignation. Let the truth come out," he said.

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ALLEGATIONS AGAINST APP
Telegram CEO Pavel Durov held in France
WORLD » PAGE 16

Trade unions awaiting fine print of UPS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Central trade unions offered a mixed response to the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), with most saying they are awaiting the notification for clarity on the new scheme's details, including on the ratio of the lumpsum payment at retirement, future revisions, and tax benefits.

However, even those who welcomed the scheme bemoaned the fact that the UPS, unlike the old pension scheme (OPS), requires the employee to contribute 10% of their salary to the scheme's fund.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 13

Congress says BJP trying to lure MLAs

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As the Congress government tries to stave off the BJP-Janata Dal's (Secular) charge of irregularities in the allotment of sites by MUDA to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife, claims of the return of 'Operation Lotus' by the BJP to destabilise the government emerged on Sunday.

While Congress legislator from Mandya Ravikumar Gowda (Ganiga) claimed that the party's legislators are being offered ₹100 crore by the BJP to switch sides, Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil also claimed that efforts are being made to woo Congress legislators.

Mr. Gowda claimed that someone had approached him with an offer of money.

"They have increased the offer from ₹50 crore to ₹100 crore. Attempts are being made to bring down the Congress government. I have an audio recording of the same and will release it at an appropriate time," he said.

He accused a group of leaders, including Union Ministers H.D. Kumaraswamy, Pralhad Joshi, and Shobha Karandlaje, besides BJP national general secretary (Organisation) B.L. Santhosh as to be behind the operation.

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CBI completes polygraph test in Kolkata rape-murder

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday completed polygraph tests on seven people in connection with the rape and murder of a resident doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

On Saturday, polygraph tests were conducted on four doctors who had dinner with the victim in the early hours of August 9. On Sunday, the CBI team visited the Presidency Correctional Home and conducted the test on the accused Sanjay Roy, a civic police volunteer. Tests were also conducted on another police volunteer, and on Sandip Kumar Ghosh, the former principal of R.G. Kar MCH. All seven gave their consent to the test.

Place of unrest: Security personnel stand guard outside the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

The CBI also conducted searches in the residences of Dr. Ghosh and other officials related to the R.G. Kar MCH, including the home of Sanjay Vashisth, former superintendent of the hospital.

These searches and raids were part of the CBI's investigation into allegations of financial irregularities involving Dr. Ghosh.

Resident doctors at the R.G. Kar Hospital vowed to continue their strike.

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For Shreyas Iyer, the time to walk the talk is now

The Mumbai batter has been around long enough to know that the only way he can influence selection is by stacking up a mountain of runs as he is an attractive stroke-maker who uses his height to great effect, is wonderfully nimble-footed, and his mastery of spin is second to none

K.V.S. GIRI

R. Kaushik

February 2024 was a month to forget for Shreyas Iyer. In the first week, he played himself out of the Test squad with the latest in a series of underwhelming performances in a 12-month period, dismissed for 27 and 29 in the second of five matches against England in Visakhapatnam. It extended his sequence of hits without a half-century in the five-day game to 12 innings, during which his highest was 35, in the preceding Test in Hyderabad.

In the last week of that same month, the right-hander from Mumbai played – or is it unplayed, if such a word exists? – himself out of the BCCI's annual contracts list after skipping a couple of Ranji Trophy games for his state side despite the sport's governing body in the country insisting that players put domestic cricket second only to playing for the national side.

Shreyas cited a recurring back issue to justify his absence, but the fact that he was training with his IPL franchise, Kolkata Knight Riders, during that same time didn't go down well with the men who matter. Shreyas returned to play the final which Mumbai won, making a sparkling 95 in the second innings against Vidarbha, but the damage had already been done.

Race to resurrection

Six months on, the 29-year-old is in a race to resurrect his Test career. He hasn't played a Twenty20 International since the tour of South Africa last December and was left out of the T20 World Cup-winning squad despite leading KKR to the IPL title last season and weighing in with 351 influential runs at an excellent strike-rate of 146.86.

And while he is still an integral part of the 50-over set-up, evidenced by his presence at the One-Day International series in Sri Lanka earlier this month, it's the calling of the five-day game that appeals to him the most.

Shreyas' return to the Test landscape won't be straightforward. For one thing, he must prove, without a shadow of doubt, that his long-format mojo is still intact. His last year with the Indian Test team was fruitless from an individual perspective and, to an extent, a collective standpoint – India won only three out of seven outings, while losing at home to Australia (Indore) and England (Hyderabad) and to South Africa in Centurion.

Young batters

Once he went out of reckoning, a slew of younger batters made the most of their call-ups, not least his Mumbai mate Sarfaraz Khan, who has three half-centuries in his first five innings, and Devdutt Padikkal, whose only Test knock fetched him 65 against England in Dharamshala in March.

For the entire series against England, India was without Virat Kohli, away on

K.R. DEEPAK

paternity leave. K.L. Rahul, playing as a specialist batter after having kept wickets in South Africa, missed the last four Tests through injury, and while Rajat Patidar didn't grab his chances, Sarfaraz, Padikkal and wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel did more than enough to continue to figure prominently on the selection radar. Now that Kohli and Rahul are back in business, the magnitude of the task ahead of Shreyas has grown massively.

Difficult scenario

If India continues to play five specialist bowlers – and it's difficult to imagine a change in tack despite Gautam Gambhir succeeding Rahul Dravid as the head coach – only one middle-order slot will be up for grabs behind skipper Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli. There are a host of contenders for that solitary berth and Shreyas knows he isn't quite at the top of that list. As such, September will offer him a grand opportunity to reiterate his credentials and his value to the team.

This edition of the Duleep Trophy will be thickly populated by India internationals, thanks to the BCCI's policy of not allowing the stars to pick and choose their battles. The first round, starting on September 5 in Bengaluru and Anantapur, will see all but four – Rohit, Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and R. Ashwin – of the Test regulars in action.

Shreyas has been named captain of Team D; in the reasonably likely event of his non-inclusion for the Bangladesh Tests starting on September 19, he will play all three rounds, the last two in relative anonymity with the Test matches certain to garner precedence. Away from the spotlight, so to speak, Shreyas can go

> It's just that when I go to hit some shots, you are bound to get out and sometimes it may work, sometimes it may not
>
> **SHREYAS**
> On his alledged shortcomings against the shorter deliveries

about his business without the attendant pressure of a million eyeballs on him. What he does of this next month, and the Ranji Trophy that will kick off in early October, will determine how his immediate red-ball future shapes up.

Banging start

Shreyas broke into Test cricket with a bang in November 2021, in Dravid's first game in charge as Ravi Shastri's successor. The rangy right-hander with a reputation for taking down spin of the highest quality with unmatched authority backed up 105 in the first innings against New Zealand in Kanpur (at the same Green Park arena where G.R. Vishwanath made a second-innings 137 on debut against Australia in 1969) with 65; he made four more scores in excess of 50 in his next nine innings, but since his 87 in Mirpur against Bangladesh in December 2022 – his second-innings 29 not out under tremendous pressure was crucial to victory alongside Ashwin's unbeaten 42 – he has struggled to crack the Test code, stumbling from one poor outing to another.

It wasn't long after the Bangladesh series that Shreyas' back injury flared up. After non-surgical remedial measures failed, he was forced to go under the knife in London in April last year, which put his participation in the home 50-over World Cup in jeopardy. But so highly did Rohit and Dravid rate him as a one-day force that they were willing to walk the extra mile to accommodate him in their plans.

His return to play at the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka last August-September was marred by a flare-up of the back on the eve of India's first Super Four outing against Pakistan, which tested the leadership group's patience and resolve.

Form and fitness

But towards the end of September, Shreyas proved his form and fitness with 105 and 48 in consecutive matches against Australia; at the World Cup, he justified the faith shown by the think-tank with several stunning knocks including back-to-back hundreds against Netherlands and in the semifinal against New Zealand, though like most of his colleagues, he too failed to get going in the final against Australia, dismissed for just four.

Shreyas has been upstaged in the T20 scheme of things by a set of more attacking batters who have another string to their bow. He might still nurture aspirations of breaking back into the shortest format and the IPL, as much as any other event including the inter-state Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy tournament, will provide him the platform to state his case, but having had a taste of Test cricket, and not too unsuccessfully at that, Shreyas will be keen to regain his place in the five-day ecosystem.

Much to his annoyance, Shreyas has been saddled with the reputation of being suspect against the short ball, not unlike Suresh Raina more than a decade and a bit back. Oppositions haven't been chary of testing him repeatedly and he hasn't always come up trumps, often getting into awkward positions or holing out in attempting to impose his authority without actually being in control.

Taking offence

At the home World Cup, he took offence when confronted with a direct question on his discomfort against the short stuff, but conceded during a rambling reply, "It's just that when I go to hit some shots, you are bound to get out and sometimes it may work, sometimes it may not. And majority of the times it hasn't worked for me, maybe that's the reason you think it's a problem for me. But in my mind, I know there's no problem."

It's one thing to have that confidence, it's quite another to use it to good effect out in the middle. At the conclusion of the home international Test season in early November, India has a sequence of 10 – and maybe 11, if it reaches the final of the World Test –Championship for a third successive time – overseas Tests lined up, equally split between Australia and England. That's a lot of cricket in a not-very-long span of time, split by the ICC Champions Trophy and the IPL. If Shreyas desires to be on the flight to Australia and / or England, the time to walk the talk is now.

When he is firing on all cylinders, Shreyas is an absolute delight to watch. An attractive stroke-maker who uses his height to great effect and is wonderfully nimble-footed, his mastery of spin is second to none and stems from his sustained breeding in Indian domestic cricket.

Small sample size

That's not to say that he isn't at home against fast bowling; like most top batters of any generation from any part of the world, the moving ball does throw up probing questions and the short one challenges him more than any other delivery, but he has played only three Tests overseas and it will be unfair to judge him on that small sample size.

Whether there is a greater dataset in 12 months' time, however, remains to be seen. Shreyas has been around long enough to know that the only way he can influence selection is by stacking up a mountain of runs and then hoping for the best. A good friend recently referred to him as an enigma and an enchanter; more of the latter and less of the former will work quite nicely, thank you.

THE GIST

- When he is firing on all cylinders, Shreyas is an absolute delight to watch
- His recurring back issue and a string of underwhelming performances has truncated his Test career
- Shreyas has also been saddled with the reputation of being suspect against the short ball
- The following months — featuring the Duleep and Ranji trophies — will offer a grand opportunity to reiterate his credentials

Students barred earlier allowed to participate in CET counselling

As per its rules, KEA has barred several hundred students, who had secured an engineering seat in CET-2023 but neither got admitted nor surrendered the seat, from counselling for three years

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The KEA has now allowed seven students to take part in CET-2024 counselling on the condition of surrendering their seats with a fee if they are found guilty in a probe. FILE PHOTO

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) has allowed seven students, who were barred earlier, to participate in this year's Common Entrance Test counselling, following directions from the High Court of Karnataka.

As per its rules, KEA has barred several hundred students from counselling for three years, who secured an engineering seat in CET-2023 but neither got admitted to the said college nor surrendered that seat. However, seven of these students challenged the KEA's decision alleging they did not even make an "option entry" during CET-2023 counselling. KEA rejected their claim, following which they challenged it in the High Court. The court directed KEA that these students should be allowed to participate in CET-2024 counselling, pending a probe. KEA has now instituted a probe led by its Administrative Officer (AO).

Following this, KEA has now allowed the seven students to take part in CET-2024 counselling on the condition of surrendering their seats with a fee if they are found guilty by the probe.

"If the students themselves have done the option entry last year and got a seat, but are not admitted in the college or if it is confirmed by the investigation that the seat has not been surrendered to KEA, we will withdraw the seat of such students without any hesitation and with a fee," said H. Prasanna, Executive Director, KEA.

A recurring problem

"The KEA rules are clear on the issue: students should get admitted in the college where they got a seat in the three rounds of seat allotment process. If they do not get the desired course in the college of their choice, they should surrender the seat to KEA and exit from the counselling process. In case, the students neither surrender their seat nor exit from the counselling process, such students will be barred from participating in the CET counselling process for the next three years," a senior official said.

Hundreds of students who got engineering seats during the CET-2023 counselling, but neither got themselves admitted nor surrendered their seats, have rewritten CET this year and tried to apply for counselling. But they have been barred.

Probe ordered

"The seven students have claimed that since they got low marks in the CET-2023, they decided to write the exam again to improve their marks and did so in 2024. But, on cross-verifying with the KEA data, it was confirmed that those students had made the option entry last time and got a seat in the third round. But, they are arguing that we have not made an option entry," Mr. Prasanna said.

However, explaining how such a lapse could have happened, Mr. Prasanna said while the entire counselling process is online, some students from rural areas not well versed in handling computers may have given their login credentials to those at cyber centres, where without their knowledge someone may have done option entry for them.

"The investigation will look into this aspect as well. We will even file a police complaint if needed," he said. He also warned students against sharing their login credentials with others.

Mock seat allotment results announced

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) announced the results of the first round of mock seat allotment on Sunday for admission into professional courses, including medical, dental, AYUSH, and Engineering.

The mock results are available on the KEA website. Candidates can review their results and, if necessary, change their preferred colleges/courses by 11 a.m. on Tuesday, according to a press release from KEA Executive Director H. Prasanna.

As scheduled, the actual seat allotment results for the first round will be announced on September 1.

The mock seat allotment has been carried out based on the preferences and choices entered by candidates up to 5 p.m. on August 22, considering merit and the roster system.

Courses

Seats have been allotted for courses such as Architecture, Yoga and Naturopathy, Agricultural Science, Veterinary Science, B.Sc. (Nursing), B.Pharm, and Pharm-D.

Deadline

Eligible candidates who have not yet entered their preferences or choices can do so by 11 a.m. on Tuesday to be considered for the first round of seat allotment.

The KEA has compiled a list of frequently asked questions on its website, which candidates can refer to for further clarification.

City gets air-conditioned underground market

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah inaugurating Krishnadevaraya Palike Bazaar near Vijayanagar bus stand on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After nearly six years of being under construction, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) ambitious Palike Bazaar in Vijayanagar has opened its doors to the public. The underground, hi-tech, and air-conditioned market, modelled after New Delhi's Palika Bazaar, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday.

The project, which commenced in 2018, is built to house local vendors and small businesses in the area. "The Palike Bazaar aims to provide a modern and comfortable environment for vendors who previously had to endure harsh weather conditions while conducting their business on the streets," Mr. Siddaramaiah said after inauguration.

According to BBMP officials, the initiative is part of a broader effort to establish various markets within the city limits, offering vendors a dedicated space to operate. The market boasts several key features that make it a first-of-its-kind in South India. Notably, it is the city's first air-conditioned underground market, built at a cost of ₹13 crore. The bazaar is divided into several sections, each catering to different types of vendors. "Section 1" is designated as the Small Vendor Zone, housing 136 stalls, while "Section 2" is reserved for special vendors with 11 stalls. Additionally, the market includes nine general vendor zones, providing ample space for a variety of businesses.

The market has been built at a cost of ₹13 crore. The bazaar is divided into several sections, each catering to different types of vendors. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

To ensure the smooth operation of the market, 79 market officers have been appointed to oversee activities. The market is also equipped with public address systems installed at two key locations to facilitate communication. Safety has been a priority in the design of the market, with the installation of 250 street lights to enhance visibility and fire extinguishers strategically placed in all market areas, BBMP said in a statement.

"People have been urging for the Palike Bazaar for many years. This market will help the street vendors who were facing harsh weather conditions like sun, rain, and cold. Now, they can utilise this air-conditioned market where they can do their business without any worries," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah also recalled his involvement in the early stages of the project, stating, "When I was Chief Minister in 2017, I had approved the project for ₹5 crores as requested by the M. Krishnappa, Vijayanagar MLA, which was his dream."

Celebration time

Children dressed in Krishna's attire at a performance on the eve of Krishna Janmashtami in Bengaluru on Sunday. SUDHAKAR JAIN

IIM-B to set up India's first Global Centre of Excellence on Private Equity and Venture Capital

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with alumnus Mathew Cyriac, Executive Chairman, Florintree Advisors Pvt Ltd., to set up the country's first Global Centre of Excellence on Private Equity and Venture Capital on IIM-Bangalore campus, on Sunday. The Centre will be named after investment banker Tony James. The Centre aims to be a global thought leader for research in all matters relating to Private Equity and Venture Capital, IIM-B said in a statement released on Sunday. "This is the single largest ever contribution from an alumnus and we are grateful to Mathew Cyriac not just for his generous support but for his extreme thoughtfulness in contributing to the naming of four classrooms on campus after faculty who taught his batch, and for his clarity in setting up scholarships for postgraduate programmes and PhD students," said Professor Rishikesha T. Krishnan, Director, IIM Bangalore, at the MoU exchange on Sunday. Mr. Cyriac is an alumnus of the postgraduate programme class of 1994.

"The mission is to create an ecosystem wherein academics, practitioners, and regulators collaborate to develop and nurture world-class private equity and venture capital talent. The first-of-its-kind centre will serve as a hub for cutting-edge research, education, and industry collaboration in the field of PEVC, where students will connect with explore the latest trends in PEVC," IIM-B said.

11,700 books at Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi digitised

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Close to 11,700 books from the Karnataka Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi Library have been digitised over the last few months, and this has now been distributed to Gandhi Bhavans across the country to reach a larger audience.

Speaking after handing over the digitised books to the representatives, on Sunday, Carl Malamud, founder of Servants of Knowledge, a U.S.-based non-profit organisation said that they were open to digitise more books with Gandhian principles. "We are making these books available to the librarians of these organisations so that the literature is available to the public for non-commercial uses within the parameters of the copyright laws of India. We have also offered to digitise, at no additional cost, any additional literature related to Gandhi that may be available at other institutions," he said.

Among the works digitised are 'The collected works of Gandhi', the Nav Jeevan trust pamphlets, the biographies by Pyare Lal Nayyar, 126 audios of speeches Gandhi gave on All India Radio, and 107 volumes of 'Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru', books by Rana Kishan and Subhash Chandra Bose.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated August 26, we take a look at the mounting accidents on toll roads in Bengaluru. The increased fatalities have finally pushed the city police to fix a speed limit on the access-controlled NICE road and ban two-wheelers between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. But beyond reckless riding and driving, a big question mark hangs over poor road design as well.

READER'S MAIL

Planting of saplings

Sir, – BBMP's practice of planting saplings during the monsoon is generally a farce in many areas.
An example is Hennur Road where hundreds of saplings were planted last year.
More than 95% of them perished for want of aftercare and a few that survived are in bad shape.
Most of the bamboo shields have fallen and are lying on the road median.
It appears that the BBMP's policy is to plant and forget which is a waste of public funds.
While giving contract for planting saplings, the civic body must ensure that these saplings are cared for.

K.M. Varkey,
Bengaluru

Litter on the street

Sir, – After the Varamahalakshmi festival, Gandhi Bazaar was littered with covers and leftovers from vendors, so much so that it was difficult to walk on the footpath even though pourakarmikas were doing their best to clear them.
With many festivals coming up, the BBMP needs to ensure that the vendors clear the mess.

G. Padmanabhan,
Bengaluru

SSP portal

Sir, – The Karnataka government has been doing an injustice to the students of the OBC community by closing the SSP scholarship portal even before the result of the previous academic year was declared. The scholarship for 2022-23 has also not been issued to many medical and engineering students.
It is ironic that the government, while doing an injustice to the students of the OBC community, has planned to celebrate the birth anniversary of D. Devaraj Urs in a grand manner.
We request the authorities concerned to reopen the scholarship portal for this year and also reimburse the pending scholarships of the previous year.

Arjun S. Gowda,
Bengaluru

Readers can write to letters.bangalore @thehindu.co.in

Dasara jumbos commence daily drill

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Less than 48 hours after their arrival at the palace, the first batch of nine elephants led by tusker Abhimanyu began their daily march on Sunday to prepare for the Dasara festivities to be held in October.

Their daily routine includes walking along the 5 km-long procession route from the palace to the Bannimantap Grounds and back. En route, the herd crossed K.R. Circle, Sayyaji Rao Road, marched along Nelson Mandela Road before reaching the Bannimantap Grounds.

The elephants will be accompanied by their mahouts and assistants apart from senior Forest Department officials who will monitor their every move daily.

The regular march not only makes the elephants familiar with the procession route but they also get accustomed to human presence in large numbers apart from the din and noise of a city.

Cattle injured in crude bomb blast sold illegally to slaughterhouses

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Officials of the Animal Husbandry Department had a rude shock when they went to treat two oxen injured in crude bomb explosions in Chamarajanagar a few days ago and found that the cattle were sold off to illegal slaughterhouses.

On August 21, two oxen belonging to Akkamma, a resident of Koudalli, Hanur taluk, were injured when they bit into crude bombs laced with eatables placed in the fields. The animals were severely injured and were bleeding profusely. Akkamma alerted police and forest and police officials.

The Ramapura Police and forest officials rushed to the spot and recovered remnants of the crude bombs.

Farmers in these areas usually place crude bombs laced with eatables to hunt wild animals, especially wild boars, who raid farms and damage crops. The government has banned this practice of hunting. However, the incident shows that it continues unabated.

Veterinary doctors who visited the village on Sunday to treat the injured animals found that the cattle had been sold to illegal slaughterhouses and the cattle owner was non-cooperative.

"This is not an isolated incident," said Dr. Hanumegowda, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Chamarajanagar district said. "Whenever cattle are injured in such incidents, the cattle owners sell them off to slaughterhouses to get rid of them," he said. "In this case, the Forest Department and the police are making efforts to trace the accused who placed the crude bombs, and we were making efforts to treat the animals, but they have been sold off to slaughterhouses," he rued.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

E-Tender Notice No. Y/E.29/2024-25/41 Dated: 13.08.2024

Description of work	Approx. Value
Extension of Road-4 Line for Shunting Neck by 750 Mtrs at Sasalu (SLU) Yard (Provision of Standard Height Gauge).	Rs. 15,47,096/-

Last date for submission of bids : **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 04.09.2024**

E-Tender Notice No. Y/E.29/2024-25/42 Dated: 13.08.2024

Description of work	Approx. Value
(Re-tender) Extension of Road-4 Line for Shunting Neck by 750 Mtrs at Sasalu (SLU) Yard.	Rs. 53,37,191.81/-

Last date for submission of bids : **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 05.09.2024**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

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PUB/354/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Mysuru**
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Clients, Mr. Ranjan Ghosh S/o Sri. P.B. Ghosh along with his wife **Mrs. Suparna Ghosh** are the joint and absolute owners of the **Apartment No. 2223**, S4, BR Type, 22nd Floor in the project "PRESTIGE WHITE MEADOWS" situated at Whitefield Village, K.R.Pura Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore.
Further Mr. Ranjan Ghosh while travelling, had misplaced/lost the said Original Power of Attorney (attested on 12-5-2016)executed by Mrs. Suparna Ghosh in favour of Mr. Ranjan Ghosh for the purpose of purchasing the above mentioned apartment and to that effect, he has lodged online police (Bengaluru City) complaint on 22-8-2022 (Lost report No. 1205690/2022).
Any finder/or any person having any type of claim may kindly return the above mentioned Original Power of Attorneyor file objections to the undersigned **within 7 days** from the date of notice failing which my clients shall presume that the same is lost and shall proceed on the basis that there are no claims/interest whatsoever from any person/s.

Chethan Kumar N, Advocate, Tarka Legal, No. 15/1, 3rd Main, Sadashivanagar, B'lore-80, **Mob: 7829444449.**

Frequent mass wasting in Tibet a cause for worry in India

According to a new study, more than 700 million cubic metres of debris have been mobilised in the Sedongpu gully catchment since 2017; the combination of long-term warming and intense local shaking due to earthquakes has greatly enhanced landslide activity in the area

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A new study on the high frequency of mass wasting events in the Sedongpu Gully of the Tibetan Plateau since 2017 and the rapid warming of the area, which rarely experienced temperatures beyond 0° C before 2012, could be bad signs for India, specifically the country's northeast.

A geological event, mass wasting is the gravity-influenced movement of rock and soil down a slope. A gully is a landform created by erosion from running water, mass movement or both.

The Sedongpu Gully, in the catchment of the Sedongpu glacier and its valley, is 11 km long and covers 66.8 sq. km. It drains into the Yarlung Zangbo, or the Tsangpo River, near where it takes a sharp turn – called the Great Bend – while flowing around Mt. Namcha Barwa (altitude 7,782 metres) and Mt. Gyala Peri (7,294 metres) to create a gorge 505 km long and 6,009 metres deep. This is one of the deepest gorges on the earth.

The Great Bend is close to Tibet's border with Arunachal Pradesh, where the Tsangpo flows as the Siang river. In Assam further downstream, the Siang meets the Dibang and Lohit to form the Brahmaputra, which flows as the Jamuna in Bangladesh.

The study, authored by Weile Li and six others associated with China's Chengdu University of Technology, was published on August 2 in the *Journal of Rock Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering*.

According to their paper, more than 700 million cubic metres of debris have been mobilised in the Sedongpu gully catchment since 2017. The combination of long-term warming and intense local shaking due to earthquakes has greatly enhanced landslide activity in the area. The impact on humans has been low because it is so remote.

However, environment scientists in Assam said the study underlining landslides was ominous for areas hundreds of kilometres downstream. The threat has been accentuated by big dams such as the 510-MW Zangmu on the Tsangpo and India's planned projects on the Siang.

The Sedongpu Gully in Tibetan China, visible just to the left of the Yarlung Tsangpo river at the centre of this image taken on December 30, 2020. GOOGLE EARTH

River choking and flash floods

"China plans to set up a 60-gigawatt project on the Tsangpo, which will [have] thrice the capacity of the Three Gorges project on the Yangtze, the world's largest hydropower plant," said Partha Jyoti Das, the head of the Water, Climate, and Hazard Division of Aaranyak, a Guwahati-based biodiversity research organisation. "This region is characterised by enormous geophysical instability and experienced the 8.6-magnitude Assam-Tibet or Medog earthquake in 1950, one of the biggest of the 20th century. The 6.4-magnitude Nyingchi earthquake hit the same region in November 2017."

"The Sedongpu study has serious implications for the Tsangpo-Siang-Brahmaputra-Jamuna, especially in India and Bangladesh. The most direct consequence could be the addition of major amounts of sediments to the course of the river, already one of the most sediment-laden rivers of the world," he said.

The Brahmaputra carries more than 800 tonnes of sediment at Pandu in Guwahati, becoming more than a billion tonnes at Bahadurabad in Bangladesh. Dr. Das said increasing sedimentation may make the river more intensely braided in the Assam plains, which could lead to more bank erosion.

"The sedimentation can elevate the river beds more, accentuating flood hazards. Further, the channels of the river in Assam and Bangladesh may get choked with sand and silt in the lean season making navigation difficult and affecting livelihoods related to fishing," he said.

The Sedongpu study examined the patterns of landslides in the gully catchment using satellite data from December 1969 to June 2023. From 149 satellite images, they identified 19 large mass-wasting events or event groups they divided into three sub-patterns: ice-rock avalanche (IRA), ice-moraine avalanche (IMA), and glacier debris flow (GDF). A moraine is a mass of rocks and sediment deposited by a glacier.

> The breaching of the blockages leads to catastrophic flash floods in the downstream areas such as the ones in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang and Assam's Dhemaji district in 2000
>
> **PARTHA JYOTI DAS**
> Head of Water, Climate & Hazard Division, Aaranyak

The debris from the IRAs temporarily blocked the Tsangpo and tributary Yigong. "The breaching of the blockages leads to catastrophic flash floods in the downstream areas such as the ones in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang and Assam's Dhemaji district in 2000. These floods were triggered by the outburst of a dam created on the Yigong by the glaciated debris and rock materials generated during a huge landslide," Dr. Das said.

Lull before hyperactivity

The Sedongpu study noted that the earliest mass wasting event in the area occurred from 1974 to 1975 and satellite images thereafter indicated no catastrophic events until 1987. Two IMAs happened from 1998 to 2000 and the gully remained quiet again from 2001 to 2017.

"The gully entered a very active period [in] 2017 with a large IRA from October 20-27 temporarily blocking the Yarlung Tsangpo," the paper said, underlining the Nyingchi earthquake – its epicentre was 8 km from the gully's edge – that disrupted the stability of the rocks and glaciers.

Three successive GDFs followed from November to December 2017 and two catastrophic IRAs occurred "unexpectedly" in 2018 to completely block the Tsangpo and form another gully more than 300 metres deep. "After these events, the Sedongpu gully entered an intense erosion period... Overall, among the 19 events, 13 were concentrated after 2017, accounting for 68.4% of the total," the paper said.

The geoscientists said the bedrock of the Sedongpu basin consists mostly of Proterozoic marble and the conditions indicate its land surface temperature ranges from -5° to -15° C, rarely exceeding 0° C before 2012. Data from the nearby weather stations at Bomi and Linzhi revealed that the annual temperature in this area increased at rates of 0.34° to 0.36° C during 1981-2018, which is higher than the global average. "It is high time we undertook similar studies to monitor the status and trends of geophysical events leading to landslides, rockfalls, and other erosional processes that could affect the geomorphic and hydrological regime of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries apart from attending to sediment management," Dr. Das said.

THE GIST

A geological event, mass wasting is the gravity-influenced movement of rock and soil down a slope

A gully is a landform created by erosion from running water, mass movement or both

Geoscientists examined the patterns of landslides in the Sedongpu gully catchment using satellite data from December 1969 to June 2023

From 149 satellite images, they identified 19 large mass-wasting events or event groups they divided into three sub-patterns

BIG SHOT

Rim of fire: This picture taken on August 22 and released by Iceland's State Police shows lava and smoke erupting from a new volcano near Grindavik on Reykjanes Peninsula. The volcano spewed hot lava into the air in the sixth eruption to hit the region since December 2023, authorities said, following a series of earthquakes. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

Sonoluminescence: a little light

Arkatapa Basu

The human eye is adept at picking out the smallest glimmer of light in shadowed spaces and the faintest star in the heavens (but light pollution has made this very hard). Mysterious flashes of light have always piqued our interest — and this is perhaps where sonoluminescence was born.

When two German engineers were studying sonar — the use of sound to navigate, like bats — in 1934, they stumbled upon a strange phenomenon: when a small bubble trapped in a liquid is hit by powerful sound waves, it seems to produce a flash of light.

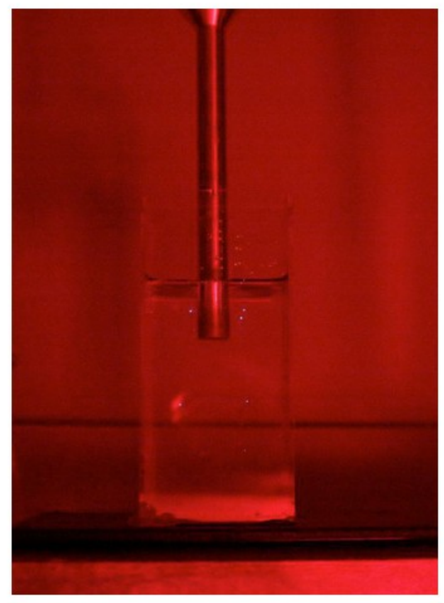
The cause turned out to be straightforward, if also fascinating: the alternating high- and low-pressure phases of sound waves caused the bubble to expand and collapse rapidly. During the collapse, the bubble compressed so intensely that the temperature inside soared to several thousand kelvin.

The extreme temperature caused gases within the bubble to ionise and release light energy in about a trillionth of a second.

We do not know how exactly this light is produced — yet.

The world has more mysteries than we like to admit.

Sonoluminescence is not restricted to labs. Pistol shrimp (family *Alpheidae*) possess a specialised claw that it can snap shut with incredible speed. The result is a jet of water moving so fast that it creates a low-pressure bubble in the water. And when this bubble collapses, it generates a loud sound, intense heat, and, if you're lucky (or unlucky?) to be nearby, a fleeting flash of light.



Long-exposure photograph of sonoluminescence. Each bright blue point is a bubble undergoing sonoluminescence. BRIAN POLLACK (CC BY-SA 3.0)

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Whitefield residents urge BMTC to introduce metro feeder buses to address last-mile connectivity

They say the absence of such services is discouraging the use of public transport and instead promoting the use of private vehicles, contributing to traffic congestion

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A file photo of a feeder bus service. Whitefield residents have expressed frustration over the lack of feeder bus services despite repeated requests and engagements with the Directorate of Urban Land Transport and BMTC.

Residents of Whitefield, recently connected by Namma Metro, have now demanded the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) to introduce metro feeder bus services to the Whitefield Metro station, particularly from the areas of Doddanekundi, Varthur, and Balagere. Currently, these areas lack feeder services, forcing many commuters to rely on their own vehicles, cabs and autos for their daily commute.

Residents have expressed frustration over the lack of feeder buses despite repeated requests and engagements with the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) and BMTC. They believe the absence of feeder services to certain areas is discouraging the use of public transport and instead promoting the use of private vehicles, contributing to traffic congestion in an area already notorious for traffic snarls everyday.

"Despite our efforts to work with DULT and BMTC, there seems to be little receptivity towards providing feeders to metro stations from areas that are not currently covered," said Sudarshan Ranganathan, a resident of Whitefield. "Can BMTC not capitalise on this demand and offer high-frequency feeder services to metro stations for underserved areas? Many parts of Whitefield, Doddanekundi, Varthur, and Balagere are prime examples of areas that lack proper feeders to the Whitefield Metro station. It seems that BMTC's feeder services are primarily targeting corporate users, leaving the general public neglected," he added.

Another resident, Priya Kumari R, said, "The whole point of having a metro network is to reduce the dependency on private vehicles and ease the traffic burden on the roads. But without adequate feeder services, many people are left with no choice but to drive to the metro station or skip public transport altogether. I travel four kilometers every day from my home in Balagere to the Whitefield Metro station on my two-wheeler, and it is a tiring commute. It is disappointing that BMTC hasn't yet recognised the potential of extending feeder services to all areas."

Route surveys

In response to these concerns, BMTC officials said that they are indeed working on introducing more metro feeder services across the city, with a focus on the Whitefield area. "We have already introduced feeder bus services from Kadugodi Bus Station via Hope Farm, ITPL, Whitefield TTMC, Graphite India, Kundalahalli Gate, Varthur Kodi, and Whitefield Post Office," a BMTC official said. The official further mentioned that BMTC plans to expand these services after conducting thorough route surveys in areas that currently lack them. "We will introduce the services after conducting a route survey wherever there are no services," the official added.

More feeder routes

There is significant demand for feeder services along the metro line, particularly on the 43.49 km Purple Line of Namma Metro. Metro feeder services are designed to connect commuters from residential areas and key locations to nearby metro stations, ensuring a seamless transition between different modes of transport.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that BMTC is working diligently to improve metro feeder services and address last-mile connectivity issues in the city. "BMTC feeder buses are crucial for enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of the metro network, encouraging more people to choose public transport over private vehicles. BMTC plans to expand more feeder routes in the coming days," he added. BMTC is currently operating 151 metro feeder services across the city. Out of the 66 metro stations in Bengaluru, feeder services are provided from or via 43 stations.

Photo of Darshan smoking in jail goes viral, probe ordered

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The photo shows Darshan holding a coffee mug while sitting on a chair in a lawn along with three others. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Prisons and Correctional Services Department has launched a probe into a photo showing jailed Kannada film actor Darshan smoking with a coffee mug in hand, allegedly inside Parappana Agrahara Central Prison Complex, which went viral on Sunday.

The photo shows Darshan holding a coffee mug while sitting on a chair in a lawn along with three others, two among them are said to be rowdy sheeters and the other one is his manager who is also accused in the murder case for which the actor is in jail. He is also seen holding a cigarette in his left hand and chatting cheerfully.

The photograph seems to be taken from a window of the opposite building. Even as the photograph went viral, a Kannada news channel aired the recording of a video call of Darshan interacting with one of his fans and claimed that the call was made from inside the prison.

This comes days after the High Court rejected his plea for home food citing health conditions. Earlier too there were allegations of preferential treatment to the actor, who is lodged in the prison in judicial custody, in connection with a case where he along with 16 other associates allegedly killed one of his fan Renukaswamy.

Malini Krishnamurthy, Director General, Prisons and Correctional Services, has asked senior officials to visit the prison, conduct an inquiry, and submit a report on the same, including whether the photograph was genuinely taken inside the prison and whether the actor is being given any preferential treatment.

Meanwhile, N. Ravikumar, BJP MLC, came down heavily on the State government over alleged preferential treatment given to the jailed actor. "The photo indicates that Darshan may be getting all kinds of facilities inside the prison. The government should take strict action against the erring officials to ensure such incidents are not repeated," he said.

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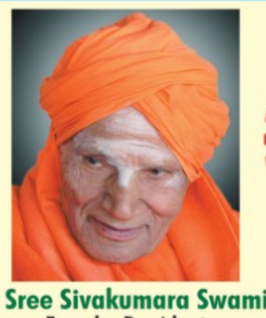
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip since October 7

40,405 The toll includes 71 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the health ministry in Gaza. At least 93,468 people have been wounded. AFP

Captives exchanged in Russia-Ukraine war due to UAE's efforts

1,788 The UAE has successfully mediated a new captives exchange between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Ukraine, releasing 230 captives. ANI

The number of vacant posts in the Assam police force

12,485 The total sanctioned strength of the Assam Police is 79,852. Currently, 15.64% of required manpower is vacant at various levels including ADGP, IG etc. PTI

Donations raised by Harris since launching her campaign

540 In million dollars. Democratic candidate and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris raised more than $540 million in little more than a month since she began her race for president. REUTERS

Number of adoptions recorded in India since 2019

18,179 The number of adoptions in 2023-24 increased significantly to 4,029 — 3,580 in-country and 449 international. PTI

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On West Bengal's civic police volunteers

How did Sanjay Roy, the main accused in the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, gain unrestricted access to the hospital? Is this the first incident involving excesses by civic police volunteers? How do such volunteers aid the government?

EXPLAINER

Shiv Sahay Singh

The story so far:

As protests rage across West Bengal and in different parts of the country over the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, questions are being raised as to how she was assaulted inside a State-run health facility. The accused, arrested hours after the crime, is a civic police volunteer, who not only had access to the hospital but also the emergency building where the victim was found dead on August 9.

Was he a civic police volunteer?

The accused, Sanjay Roy, had been working as a civic police volunteer with the Kolkata Police since 2019. Despite being engaged as a civic police volunteer, the accused enjoyed certain facilities accorded to police personnel; he drove a motorbike belonging to the police, and stayed in the barracks of the Kolkata Armed Police's fourth battalion. There are reports that the 35-year-old was also associated with the Kolkata Police Welfare Committee and helped in admission of relatives of police personnel to hospitals.

What are the terms of employment?

Civic volunteers, or village police volunteers as they are known in rural areas, are contractual workers engaged by the police for assistance, particularly in traffic management and other minor duties that do not require police personnel. The process of recruitment for civic police volunteers started in 2011 soon after the Mamata Banerjee government came to power. In a government order on September 26, 2011, the eligibility criteria for the recruitment of civic police volunteers were specified. It said the applicant should be a resident of the area under the police station where he will be deployed; should be above 20 years of age; should have passed the Class X examination and should not have any criminal record. The educational qualification of the civic police was later changed to Class VIII pass.

Systemic change: Law students hold a protest march in Kolkata, on August 24. PTI

Soon after the first set of recruitment in 2011, the police submitted a proposal to the government for engaging 1.3 lakh civic police volunteers. The honorarium of civic police volunteers is now ₹310.00 per day (about ₹9,300 per month). The ad-hoc bonus of such civic volunteers has been increased from ₹5,300 to ₹6,000 for the year 2023-2024. At present there are 7,200 civic volunteers with the Kolkata Police, while the strength of the force stands at 37,400. In the State, the strength of the police is 79,024, but there are over 1.24 lakh civic police volunteers.

What has Calcutta High Court said?

Through several orders, the Calcutta High Court has raised questions about the recruitment and legal veracity of civic police volunteers. In an order dated May 20, 2016, Justice Sanjib Banerjee of the Calcutta High Court said the recruitment scheme of civic police volunteers was devised to prey on the unemployed with little respect for taxpayer's money.

In *Chandra Kanta Ganguli vs The State of West Bengal and Others*, Justice Banerjee noted that it was not humanly or physically possible for the five men on the interview board to reasonably vet 1,351 candidates in the course of a single day for the Sarenga police station or even 875 candidates for the Barikul police station. In another case in 2020, where civic police volunteers had approached the Calcutta High Court after their services were discontinued, a division Bench had pointed out that the conditions "which we have narrated (in the order) clearly demonstrate that the deployment of appellants/petitioners as civic police volunteers was temporary in nature and it cannot be considered as an engagement on probation." There have been several occasions where the High Court and the police administration had clearly stated that civic police volunteers will not be deployed in any law and order duty. Despite such orders, there are regular instances of civic volunteers being engaged in law and order duties.

What is the main criticism?

While engagement of local civic police volunteers has come in handy for the West Bengal government in managing conflict, there have been several cases of excesses conducted by civic police volunteers. The most talked about case was the unnatural death of student leader Anish Khan in February 2022, where a civic police volunteer and a home guard were arrested. More recently, after the R.G. Kar incident, a civic police volunteer was arrested from Bhatar State General Hospital after he threatened a lady doctor.

Both Opposition leaders and political observers say the civic police is an extension of the party. Biswanath Chakraborty, professor of political science at Rabindra Bharati University, says that the civic volunteers have provided a political footing to the Trinamool Congress. "There is no proper process for appointment of such personnel. This makes the local Trinamool Congress leadership appoint personnel who will be loyal to them," Prof. Chakrabory said. The crisis of unemployment in the State has led the Mamata Banerjee government to devise an ingenious way of contractual recruitment where thousands of youth are provided just about minimum wage and can work for the party without any accountability, he pointed out.

Often the criteria of appointment has been overlooked in engaging civic police volunteers. The mother-in-law of the accused in the R.G. Kar rape and murder said her family had approached the police after Sanjay Roy assaulted their daughter. Despite a police complaint, he continued to function as a civic police volunteer and had unrestrained access to the hospital.

THE GIST

- The accused, Sanjay Roy, had been working as a civic police volunteer with the Kolkata Police since 2019.
- Through several orders, the Calcutta High Court has raised questions about the recruitment and legal veracity of civic police volunteers.
- While engagement of local civic police volunteers has come in handy for the West Bengal government in managing conflict, there have been several cases of excesses conducted by civic police volunteers. Both Opposition leaders and political observers say the civic police is an extension of the party.

What did the 2013 panel say on death penalty for rape?

What were the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee? What about marital rape?

Sudipta Datta

The story so far:

After the brutal rape and murder of a doctor on duty at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9, there has been a clamour of voices seeking the death penalty for the accused. The Justice J.S. Verma Committee recommendations, which led to the amendment of criminal laws in 2013, had specifically said it was not inclined to recommend the death penalty for rape even for the rarest of rare cases. "...seeking of [the] death penalty would be a regressive step in the field of sentencing and reformation," the committee pointed out.

What did the Union Cabinet decide?

The Union Cabinet did not take the recommendation on the death penalty when it cleared an ordinance on sexual assault in 2013, and signed the criminal amendments into law. The committee to amend criminal laws was set up after the gang rape of a paramedic student in Delhi on December 16, 2012. Led by Justice J.S. Verma (retired), the committee submitted its recommendations on January 23, 2013. One of its key suggestions, that the death penalty does not necessarily act as a deterrent against such crimes, was overlooked.

Key amendments were brought in to provide the death penalty for rape that led to death of the victim or reduced her to a persistent vegetative state (Section 376A of the Indian Penal Code) and anyone found guilty of rape more than once (Section 376E). In 2018, further changes introduced death as the maximum punishment for every participant in a gang rape when the victim is less than 12 years old (Section 376DB), and life-long imprisonment if the victim is less than 16 (Section 376DA). Under the new Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, punishment for rape is laid down in several Sections including 64, 65 and 70(2), which notes the punishment for gang rape of a woman under the age of 18 is the death penalty.

What did the committee recommend?

The Justice Verma Committee provided for enhanced sentences for rape, increasing it from 7 years to 10 years, 20 years, and life, but "short of death". "Whoever causes the person to be in a persistent vegetative state, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years, but may be for life, which shall mean the rest of that person's natural life," it noted. The committee pointed out that "there is considerable evidence that the deterrent effect of death penalty on serious crimes is actually a myth. According to the Working Group on Human Rights, the murder rate has declined consistently in India over the last 20 years despite the slowdown in the execution of death sentences since 1980."

What was its stance on marital rape?

The Verma Committee recommended that the exception to marital rape be removed, pointing out that "a marital or other relationship between the perpetrator or victim is not a valid defence against the crimes of rape or sexual violation." Concurring with the judgment of the European Commission of Human Rights in *C.R. vs U.K.*, the Verma Committee endorsed the conclusion that a rapist remains a rapist regardless of his relationship with the victim. The Union government did not go by this recommendation and refused to criminalise marital rape. Under the BNS, exception 2 of Section 63 states that "sexual intercourse or acts by a man with his wife, the wife not being under 18 years of age, is not rape."

What about gender rights?

The Verma Committee pointed out that "the ethos of empowerment of women does not limit itself to political equality, but also extends, in equal terms, to social, educational, and economic equality. If true empowerment of women were to mean anything, it is necessary that law, as well as public policy, must be capable of engaging substantially with women's rights, opportunities, acquisition of skills, the ability to generate self-confidence and insist on total equality in relationships, both with society and the state." The correction of social mindsets of its gender bias depends more on social norms, it observed, noting that "the deficiency has to be overcome by leaders in society aided by the necessary systemic changes in education and societal behaviour."

THE GIST

- The Justice Verma Committee had specifically said it was not inclined to recommend the death penalty for rape even for the rarest of rare cases.
- The committee pointed out that "there is considerable evidence that the deterrent effect of death penalty on serious crimes is actually a myth."
- The Verma Committee endorsed the idea that a rapist remains a rapist regardless of his relationship with the victim. The Union government did not go by this recommendation and refused to criminalise marital rape.

Defective number plates: City records nearly 10,000 cases in three weeks

BTP had earlier launched a special drive and even booked 22 FIRs against vehicle owners who had deliberately tried to mask their number plates. However, the menace continues unabated

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a special drive against defective number plates, the Karnataka police have booked 19,448 cases across the State over the last three weeks. Of them, 9,684 cases were booked in Bengaluru only, the highest for any district in the State.

Bengaluru was followed by Mysuru city with 634 cases, Mangaluru city with 550 cases, Belagavi city with 527 cases and Hubballi - Dharwad with 405 cases. Alok Kumar, Commissioner for Traffic and Road Safety, said that motorists with defective number plates or without number plates, used to dodge law enforcement authorities committing traffic violations. Such vehicles have been involved in accidents and even committed criminal offences.

"Defiance of law and manipulation must be dealt with firmly," he said explaining the rationale behind the special drive launched across the State.

As traffic norm enforcement has gone online, defective number plates, in many cases deliberately done to escape enforcement, have turned out to be one of the biggest challenges. FILE PHOTO

Bengaluru Traffic Police have been fighting the issue of defective number plates for over a year now. As traffic norm enforcement has gone online in the city, defective number plates, in many cases deliberately done so to escape enforcement, have turned out to be one of the biggest challenges for BTP now, as it hinders tracking down vehicles violating traffic norms and serving notices to them. BTP had earlier in October 2023 launched a special drive against defective number plates and even booked 22 FIRs against vehicle owners who had deliberately tried to mask their number plates. However, the menace continues unabated.

"This problem has now extended to other parts of the State and vehicles plying on highways started masking the registration plates either with dirt or with stickers or pieces of clothes to hoodwink enforcement cameras. To counter this, the district police put up checkpoints and intensified highway patrolling to identify or check on offenders. Following this we launched a statewide special drive," Mr. Kumar said. M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru, said that now that the traffic police have restarted physical check of vehicles on the road, they were also focusing on defective number plates.

According to the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 defaulters can face a penalty of up to ₹5,000. If a vehicle has a false number plate or missing digits or letters, the police can seize the vehicle and register a criminal case.

> Now that the traffic police have restarted physical check of vehicles on road, they are also focusing on defective number plates
>
> **M.N. ANUCHETH,** Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru

Traffic police book 324 drunk drivers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Continuing their crackdown against drunken driving, Bengaluru Traffic Police on Saturday night checked 18,769 vehicles and booked 324 cases against drivers found to be driving under the influence of alcohol. For the first time, women police personnel have also joined the teams of traffic police to carry alcometer checks on women drivers.

Saturday night was the third day in a row when the traffic police conducted special drives against drunken driving in the city this week. Earlier, special drives were conducted only on Saturday nights. However, a senior traffic police official said they now find the idea of a weekend and party-going trends changing in the city. "Many IT firms are now asking their employees to work from the office for three to four days, usually ending with a Thursday. This week we conducted special drives to check on drunk driving on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights," the official said. "Drunken driving is a serious offense that puts innocent lives at risk. Special drives will continue and offenders will face strict action," said M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Bengaluru, said.

DCP Traffic to join commuters for firsthand knowledge of problems

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To provide better facilities to road users and to resolve their issues amicably, the South Division Traffic Police are all set to launch a novel initiative called Join the Commute, which invites everyday citizens to participate in an experiment that brings the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) South Traffic directly into their daily commute.

Under the initiative, DCP Shivaprakash Devaraju will take to the roads with common commuters to understand traffic issues first hand. The initiative will be launched on Monday.

"With 'Join the Commute', our focus is to truly connect with the citizens of Bengaluru South by sharing their daily journeys. It's not just about observing from a distance, it's about traveling alongside people, understanding their frustrations, and seeing the challenges they encounter firsthand–whether it's long delays, unsafe intersections, or erratic traffic signals. By being part of their commute, we aim to listen, learn, and work together to implement practical solutions that can make a real difference on our roads." Mr. Devaraju said. He explained that he would accompany selected citizens on their daily routes to experience the challenges they face during their commutes. Whether by cab, autorikshaw, two-wheelers or cars.

How Does It Work?
Citizens interested in participating can register through a simple online form, where they provide details about their daily commute, such as their routes, mode of transportation, and timing.

Once selected, those participants will be joined by DCP South Traffic on their journey, where they will have the opportunity to share their concerns and observations.

The information gathered will be used to make data-driven improvements in traffic management, enhancing both efficiency and safety on the roads.

In phases
The initiative has been designed to work in phases, with initial testing happening on key routes before expanding to other areas across South Bengaluru, sources said.

Woman passes away hours after son ends life

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 37-year-old cab driver ended his life at his house in Kamakshipalya on Sunday. Hearing this news, his bedridden mother also passed away hours later.

The deceased Arun Kumar T., a resident of Kaveripura, was caught in a debt trap and was depressed, police sources said. He was also taking care of his 73-year-old mother who was bedridden for over a year after she suffered an injury of the spinal chord. Tragically, Kumar's mother, who heard the news of her son's death, passed away nearly two hours after his death, police said.

Kumar, who was unmarried, was found dead inside his room at 12.30 p.m. He left behind a note detailing his debts. Kamakshipalya police have filed an unnatural death report and are further probing the case.

(Those who are in distress or having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani on Ph: 104 for help)

National STEM Challenge tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Education Foundation, an initiative of Aishwarya DKS Hegde, will host the 4th edition of the National STEM Challenge, which is India's only nationwide STEM competition for government and government-aided schools.

Participants
The event will be held on Tuesday at National Hill View Public School, Banashankari. Over 2,000 students participated this year and on Tuesday, the grand finale will see 60 students participate.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, AUG. 26		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:34
RISE	23:57	SET 12:20
TUESDAY, AUG. 27		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:33
RISE	00:00	SET 13:21
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 28		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:33
RISE	00:52	SET 14:20

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	31	25
Mysuru	29	20
Bengaluru	27	21

Bengaluru Today
29°C The weather will be mostly dry. Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight warm. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
30°C Day will be slight warm with cloudy sky. Night will be pleasant. Short spell of light rain and thundershower is a chance.

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THE HINDU
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MAHALE PRITEE BAJIRAO alias Pritee Kamlesh Mahajan D/O Kamini W/O Kamlesh Bapu Mahajan R/O Flat No–A012 Mana Candela Phase 2 Kodathi Sarjapur Road Bengaluru Karnataka–560035. Changed My Name to Pritee Kamlesh Mahajan.

I, MUKUND KATTI S/o Gururaj Katti, aged 33 years, R/o A-502, Elegant Whispering Winds, Nagegowdanapalya, Kanakapura Road, Thalaghattapura, Bengaluru-560109 have changed my name from MUKUND GURURAJ KATTI to MUKUND KATTI for all future purposes.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is brought to the notice of General Public that our Clients are intending to purchase immovable property bearing Site No.7, Khatha No. 147/P, in converted Sy No. 101/1, situated at Horamavu Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, BETQ, Bangalore, property has been converted for residential purpose vide order No. ALNSR.1219/1969-70, dated 22-10-1969, issued by the Tasildar, BSTQ, presently comes under the jurisdiction of BBMP, Ward No. 25, measuring E-W: 30 ft and N-S: 40 ft, in all measuring 1200 sq ft, and bounded on the **East By:** Private Property, **West By:** Site No. 6, **North by:** Road, **South by:** Private Property, from its owner **Smt. KAMINI.V,** Aged about 56 yrs, W/o., Sri. A. Vijaya Kumar, Residing at No. 218, 2nd A Cross, 1st Stage, 2nd Block, HBR Layout, B'lore-43. Any person/s having objections to the said transactions can register their claim/s with documentary evidence with the undersigned within 7 days of publication hereof, failing which, our client will proceed with the transactions and any claim/s received thereafter will not be entertained.
H.V. NAVEEN KUMAR RAO & H.V. SUNIL KUMAR RAO, Advocates No. 57, 1st Floor, Veerapillai Street, Bengaluru-560001. Mob: 9341380225

PUBLIC NOTICE
Our Client proposes to purchase Site No. 12, BBMP Khata No. 3409/2150/12 (Old Bommanahally CMC Khatha No. 2150)in the layout formed by M/s Amalgamated Property developers known as **'Classic Orchards',** in area 4826 square feet, bounded on the North by Site No. 12A. South By Site No. 11, East by Road and West by Private Property from Mr. Robin Matthew, residing at 303, building No. 4, Mantri Residency, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore – 560 076. Any person having any objection to the aforesaid transaction may contact the undersigned with supporting documents **within 10 days** of publication of this notice, failing which our client will proceed with the transaction.
SREEVATSA ASSOCIATES ADVOCATES
50, 2nd Stage Indiranagar Bangalore – 560 038
25252898 /25295506
Bangalore Date: 26.08.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the property described in the schedule hereunder from its owners 1.**Sri.M.CHENNA REDDY,** Aged about 78 years, S/o. late Muni Reddy, Residing at No.414, 10th Cross, 14th Main, 2nd Phase, J. P.Nagar, Bangalore-560 078. And 2. **Sri. M.R.SHIVASHANKAR,** Aged about 70 years, S/o. late M.S.Rama Rao, Residing at No.8, Telecom Layout, Subramanyapura Road Subra manyapura Post,Bangalore-560061. Any person/s having any claim over the schedule property may lodge his/her/their objections or claims in writing with all documentary evidence with regard to such claims, to the undersigned within 15 days hereof, failing which my client will proceed to complete the purchase. Any objections /claims received thereafter will not be entertained and not binding upon my client.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
ITEM NO.1:
All that piece and parcel of the immovable property being converted undeveloped land bearing **New Sy.No.36/7, (old Sy.No.36/1), measuring 12 ¼ (0-12.04) Guntas and Sy. No.35/1 measuring 4 ¼ (0-04.04) guntas,** totally measuring 16 ½ (0-16.08) guntas, situated at Gollahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore District, [the Land converted for Non-Agricultural residential purpose as per the Official Memorandum No.ALN (SU) SR/43/ 2016 -17, dated 18/01/2017, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore], now within the limits of Bruhat Bangalore MahanagaraPalike, Ward No.196, PID/KhataNo.Sy.No.35/1& 36/1, and bounded on the East by ; BDA Property; West by : Road; North by: Remaining portion of Sy.Nos.36/1 & 35/1, South by : BDA Property.
ITEM No.2:
All that piece and parcel of the immovable property being converted undeveloped land bearing **New Sy.No.36/6, (old Sy.No.36/1), measuring 12 ¼ (0-12.04) Guntas and Sy.No.35/1 measuring 5 ¼ (0-05.04)guntas, totally measuring 17 ½ (0-17.08) guntas,** situated at Gollahalli Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore District, [the Land converted for Non-Agricultural residential purpose as per the Official Memorandum No.ALN (SU) SR/41/ 2016-17, dated 18/01/2017, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore], now within the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Ward No.196, PID/Khata No.Sy.No.35/ 1&36/1, and bounded on theEast by ; BDA Property; West by : Road; North by: Remaining portion of Sy. Nos.36/1 & 35/1, South by : Remaining portion of Sy.Nos. 36/1 & 35/1.
C.R.PRATHIMA, Advocate,
36, Nele, 2nd Floor, 2nd Cross, Vinayakanagara Layout, Gubbalalla Main Road, Subramanyapura Post, Bangalore-560 061.

ನಗರಸಭೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಗಂಗಾವತಿ
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CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
GANGAVATHI. Tq: Gangavathi 583227, Dist:Koppal, St: Karnataka
ಸಂ: CMCGVT/Tender/ /2024-25 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 22.08.2024

KTPP Tender
(As per Standard Tender Procurement Bid Document KW- 1 / 2 / 4)

As per KTPP 2000 Act by the Order and in the name of Governor, Karnataka State Tenders are invite under 2024-25 15th FC, SBM2.0(MRF) Grant, for various Civil Work, Eligible registered bidders are requested to bid in Two Cover System via **KTTP Portal** Website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/** on/or before the date mentioned as under through e- portal only. Manual application will not be accepted.
Further details contact under signed office at Working hours.

1.	KTTP Portal Tender Schedule Download Date from	05.09.2024 at 05.30PM
2.	Date & Time of Technical Bid Opening	06.09.2024 at 05.30PM
3.	Date & Time of Pre Bid Meeting	11.09.2024 at 11.00AM or After days
4.	Application Fee (Non-Refundable)	As per KPPP Portal

In case of the Date of Bid Opening happens to be holiday because of any Special Circumstances/Govt. holiday. The Next Date is considered as Date of Opening.

Sl.No.	Works Details	Amount Put Tender Cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	EMD(In Rupees)	Working Period
	2024-25-15th FC, SBM2.0(MRF)			
1.	DMA/2024-25/BB/ WORK_INDENT24741	220.25	3,30,400.00	06 Months
2.	DMA/2024-25/WS/ WORK_INDENT22492	108.45	1,63,000.00	06 Months

Note: Any changes in Calendar of events will be published in http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal only.
Conditions:
1. Strictly Follow the Conditions as per Tender Document.
2. If the Tenderer Who Submit their financial amount less than estimated Cost then he should submit the less DD of the difference amount (Mandatory)
3. The Sole Decision of Tender Acceptance & Rejection Authority of Muncipal Commissioner CMC Gangavathi.

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Sd/- Municipal Commissioner CMC, Gangavathi

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KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: 903/SEE/Trans(W&M)/EE(O)/AEE-1/24-25/CYS-20 Date:22.08.2024
TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP portal only)
Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited, Invites Tender for the following works:
Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/SEE/EE/AEE-1/24-25/110 KV/STN-27/110kV Bellatti/10 for Replacement of 1x10 MVA, 110/11kV transformer by 1x20 MVA, 110/11kV transformer along with switchgear at 110kV Bellatti sub-station in Shirahatti taluk, Gadag district including supply of equipments/materials, erection, civil works, testing and commissioning on Partial Turn Key Basis.
The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or directly logging on to website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **26.08.2024.** Other details can be obtained from the office of the under signed.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Elec), Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Karavara Road, Vidyuth Nagar, Hubballi

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

N Kapali (73), Retired Senior Engineer (Composing), The Hindu , Chennai passed away on 24-August-2024. Address: 15-A, Nagammai Street, Aswin Nagar, Sangiliyandapuram, Trichy-620001. Contact: 9884127555

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Mr.SUNDARESWARAN
16.06.1959 - 26.08.2023
You are remembered every moment In our lives. Time flies away so soon But not a single day passes without You in our thoughts.
Fondly remembered by
Sister, Brothers, Cousins and Relatives

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FOND REMEMBRANCE

Dr.Justice AR. LAKSHMANAN
22.03.1942 - 26.08.2020
Mrs.L.MEENAKSHI ACHI
04.06.1944 - 25.08.2020
"Lived Together And Left Together To Their Heavenly Abode"
L. Arunachalam @ Chandru - AR. Sophy, AR.L. Sundaresan - S. Abirami, AL . Umayal - AL . Kumar, S. Swarnavalli - M. Saminathan R. Arunachalam - A. Soundaram, Grand Children, Great Grand Children & A. RM.A. L. A. Family, DEVAKOTTAI.

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Tackling the frictions in cross-border payments: a call for innovative solutions

As new technologies emerge and the demand for improved cross-border payment systems grow, various bilateral and multilateral initiatives are being undertaken to enhance cross-border payment capabilities

Sanhita Chauriha

The global cross-border payments market was valued at $181.9 trillion in 2022, and is projected to reach $356.5 trillion by 2032, growing at a CAGR of 7.3% from 2023 to 2032. Historically, cross-border payments were initiated through manual processes, often involving letters of credit, checks, and extensive documentation. They have evolved significantly throughout history, closely intertwined with the development of trade, currency exchange, and industrialisation. With the onset of industrialisation and wire transfers, banks began to facilitate cross-border fund transfers. However, despite technological advances, cross-border payments remain riddled with inefficiencies that hinder their effectiveness. These frictions affect businesses and individuals and pose a significant barrier to financial inclusion and economic growth. Enhancing the efficiency of cross-border payments is a key priority on the G-20 roadmap.

The Financial Stability Board (FSB) has released numerous consultations to gather insights and drive improvements. The FSB has identified particularly four challenges associated with cross-border payments – high costs, low speed, limited access, and insufficient transparency.

The old and the new

The Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlement classify retail cross-border payment arrangements into four models: correspondent banking, closed loop or the single system model, interlinking of payment infrastructures, and peer-to-peer.

Correspondent banking uses intermediary banks, increasing the complexity of payment and costs. This model is declining due to regulatory costs and fintech competition. The single system model relies on single payment service providers, facing interoperability and regulatory issues. Interlinking payment infrastructures involve connecting countries' systems for seamless transactions but has technical and regulatory challenges. Peer-to-peer allows direct payments using technologies like distributed ledgers. The FSB has identified issues such as high costs and low speeds in these systems, proposing solutions and leveraging technologies such as blockchain and digital wallets to enhance cross-border payments.

As new technologies emerge and the demand for improved cross-border payment systems grow, various bilateral and multilateral initiatives are being undertaken to enhance cross-border payment capabilities. These new-age models represent a significant shift from traditional cross-border payment methods, reflecting the ongoing evolution of the global financial landscape. Most of these new-age cross-border payment projects fall into three primary categories: Linking Fast Payment Systems (FPS) or Instant Payment Systems (IPS), Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) projects focusing on cross-border payments, and distributed ledger technology (DLT) based cross-border payment projects. Notably, many DLT-based projects also involve CBDCs. Innovative pilot projects aim to make international transactions faster, more cost-effective, and more secure, offering improved financial access and efficiency for businesses and individuals worldwide.

The PayNow-PromptPay (PNPP or PPPN) linkage, launched in April 2021, connects the FPS of Singapore (PayNow) and Thailand (PromptPay) through cross-border gateways built and operated by both countries' systems operators (BCS and ITMX, respectively). Similarly, the UPI-PayNow linkage enables real-time, cross-border fund transfers between India and Singapore. It allows users to send money using mobile numbers or virtual payment addresses, offering a secure and cost-effective solution for international remittances.

Challenges to cross-border payments

Cross-border payments rely not only on technology but also on adherence to various legal and regulatory frameworks. According to a 2021 Committee on Payments and Market Infrastructures (CPMI) report, providers highlighted legal, regulatory, and compliance costs as major challenges. Payments crossing multiple jurisdictions must comply with diverse domestic laws regarding anti-money laundering, customer due diligence, data sharing, and settlement processes, necessitating consistent and enforceable rules across all involved countries. As innovations flourish, regulatory bodies worldwide are catching up to create frameworks that ensure security, stability, and transparency. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has been pivotal in setting international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing that include guidelines for digital payment methods.

A significant regulatory challenge noted by many surveyed projects is the inconsistent implementation of the anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) framework, which can profoundly impact system design and functionality. The FSB's 2023 report reveals that while AML/CFT requirements are based on FATF principles, fragmentation across jurisdictions creates friction, particularly in wire transfer recordkeeping. This inconsistency affects various aspects of cross-border payments, including customer identification, sanctions screening, and data sharing. Variations in documentation requirements and screening processes can lead to delays, additional queries, and operational inefficiencies.

Furthermore, privacy laws and data protection regulations contribute to these challenges. For instance, varying standards for data sharing and privacy can complicate compliance with AML/CFT regulations, leading to issues such as conflicting information and increased manual reconciliation. Overall, these regulatory discrepancies necessitate tailored solutions for each jurisdiction, adding complexity and cost to cross-border payment systems.

The way forward

To ensure the integrity and efficiency of cross-border payments, legal frameworks must balance user privacy with financial integrity requirements, particularly around AML and CFT. Countries should adopt a risk-based approach to AML/CFT compliance, ensuring consistency in regulatory measures and engaging the private sector to develop effective techno-legal solutions.

This involves clearly defining participant roles in compliance, setting transaction limits for reduced compliance requirements, enhancing sanctions screening through information sharing, and exploring Know Your Customer (KYC) utilities to streamline identity verification.

Additionally, countries should agree on common purpose codes to reduce compliance costs and technical issues in cross-border payments.

Security and privacy are paramount in cross-border payment systems. Governance frameworks should outline clear terms for data collection, processing, and sharing, ensuring compliance with data protection laws.

Privacy-by-design principles should be incorporated to address privacy concerns. International cooperation on privacy interoperability through bilateral agreements and model contractual clauses is essential. Consumer protection must include transparency regarding fees, terms, and a clear grievance redressal mechanism.

A robust dispute resolution framework should address both user grievances and inter-provider disputes, including a centralised complaint management system and a well-defined process for resolving conflicts between Payment Service Providers (PSPs).

Access to cross-border payments should be broadened by including non-bank entities and simplifying compliance requirements, while capital controls should be streamlined to facilitate smoother transactions.

Overall, these measures are critical for enhancing the efficiency and inclusiveness of cross-border payment systems.

Sanhita Chauriha is a Technology and Data Privacy Lawyer. Views are Personal.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz on the U.S. Open, the final tennis Major of the year, that gets underway today

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Name this great who claimed the men's singles crown in 1968, the first ever U.S. Open, but was ineligible to receive the $14,000 first prize because of his amateur status?

QUESTION 2
One of the three main show courts at the U.S. Open is named after the champion mentioned in the previous question. Which are the other two show courts?

QUESTION 3
Who holds the record among men and women for most titles won across events at the U.S. Open?

QUESTION 4
Which five-time singles champion has the distinction of being the only player to win the U.S. Open on three different surfaces (grass in 1974, clay in 1976 and hard in 1978, 1982-83)?

QUESTION 5
Who in 1988 beat Gabriela Sabatini to complete the first calendar Grand Slam since Margaret Court in 1970?

QUESTION 6
In the context of Indian tennis, what connects Martin Damm, Lukas Dlouhy, Radek Stepanek, Cara Black and Martina Hingis?

Visual question:
Name this former champion, who broke the colour barrier in tennis and was the first African-American to win a Grand Slam title, whose statue is located at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. AFP

Questions and Answers to the August 23 edition of the daily quiz: 1. Only two other politicians (since World War II) were elected as Vice Presidents of the U.S. and were from the State of Minnesota. **Ans: Walter Mondale, Hubert Humphrey**
2. Directed by Ron Howard, this 2020 drama film was based on the memoir written by the current vice presidential candidate of the Republican party. **Ans: J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy***
3. The father of the current Vice President of the U.S, and his country of origin. **Ans: Donald Harris, Jamaica**
4. This Vice President went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize (jointly with another recipient). **Ans: Al Gore**
5. This man holds the distinction of being the first vice presidential nominee from one of the two major parties in the U.S. **Ans: Geraldine Ferraro**
Visual: Identify this gentleman. **Ans: John Adams, the first Vice President of the United States**
Early Birds: K. N.Viswanathan| Shraddha Padad| Seema Das

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Things between us have soured

However, I want to give her these chocolates and candies because I know she has a sweet tooth

S. Upendran

"Wow! So many varieties of sweets! Are you expecting company?"

"My neighbour celebrated his birthday yesterday. He brought all these sweets earlier this morning."

"Did you tell him that you like sweets?"

"I didn't need to. Everyone in this building knows that I have a sweet tooth."

"You have a sweet tooth? Does it mean someone who likes sweets?"

"That's right! If you say that you have a 'sweet tooth', what you're suggesting is that you're someone who is very fond of most things that taste sweet. I have a strong sweet tooth."

"Nobody in my family has a sweet tooth."

"What's happened to your voice? It sounds terrible. Did you drink..."

"Had lime juice a couple of days ago. The lemon used must have been really...How do you pronounce s..o..u..r?"

"Native speakers of English make it rhyme with 'power', 'our' and 'shower'."

"I see. I've heard many people making it rhyme with 'bore', 'pour' and 'shore'."

"That's incorrect. You know what 'sour' means, right?"

"Of course, I do! Something that has a sharp, unpleasant taste. Unripe mangoes can be, at times, very sour."

"And don't forget lemons."

"Let's forget about sour mangoes and lemons, shall we? If you're going to Gopal's party, I'd like to come with you."

"You'll need to find somebody else, I'm afraid. My relationship with Gopal has soured. So, I will not..."

"Your relationship has soured? What are you talking about?"

"The word 'sour' has several different meanings. When you talk about a relationship turning sour, what you mean is that it has become bad. The two individuals are no longer friends."

"It's no longer fun to be in the company of the other person."

"Exactly! Here's an example. *The difference of opinion about the amount of money each should get, soured relations between the two sisters*."

"Money is the main reason that relationships sour."

"It's also possible to say, 'go sour'. Sunitha is very thin skinned. If you keep making fun of her, your relationship is likely to go sour."

"It doesn't really matter. Tell me, if you are not going to the party this evening, what will you be doing?"

"I'll do what I always do. I'll sit about and watch TV."

"Sit about? Don't you mean 'sit around'?"

"They mean the same thing. When you 'sit about' or 'sit around' the house, you're wasting your time. You're not..."

"You're not doing anything useful. You do very little work."

"Very good! The two expressions are mostly used to show disapproval."

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Revue:
a variety show with topical sketches and songs and dancing and comedians

Synonym: review

Usage: *It was a highly topical political revue.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/revuepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɹəˈvjuː/, /ɹɪˈvjuː/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

EDUCATIONPLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

Think, explore, reflect, decide

Teaching students to cultivate critical thinking early lays the foundation for lifelong learning and effective decision-making.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Shraddha Bharatiya

Today, we are constantly bombarded by information with Each day bringing a deluge of news, social media updates, and diverse opinions. As a result, the ability to engage in critical thinking is more essential than ever. Without the capacity to critically evaluate this flood of information, there's a significant risk of making hasty decisions based on incomplete or misleading data. Recognising this, the World Economic Forum has highlighted critical thinking as one of the paramount skills for the 21st century.

The quality of our personal and professional life is deeply intertwined with the quality of our thinking. However, our cognitive processes are influenced by personal experiences, biases, and preconceptions, leading to a disconnect between perceived realities and the actual world. This can have adverse effects on interpersonal interactions and our relationship with the environment. Thus, fostering intellectual autonomy through critical thinking is imperative to bridge this cognitive gap.

Critical thinking, as defined by Richard Paul and Linda Elder from the Foundation for Critical Thinking, involves skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in the act of thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. This intricate process requires a deliberate slowing down of one's thought process to meticulously observe and evaluate information before accepting it.

The relevance of critical thinking today is underscored by the phenomenon of "fake news". For instance, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, false stories proliferated on social media, significantly influencing public opinion and voter behaviour. Moreover, the emergence of deepfakes – highly realistic digital forgeries of videos and images – further complicates our ability to discern truth from falsehood. In such a landscape, individuals equipped with critical thinking skills hold a distinct advantage.

By encouraging inquiry and argumentation, integrating critical thinking into the curriculum, and providing a supportive environment, we help children develop the skills they need to navigate an increasingly complex world.

Early beginnings

Acquiring critical thinking skills is not an overnight process; it requires nurturing from a young age. Richard Dawkins advises parents and educators to cultivate independent thinking in children. Encourage them to ask probing questions and base their opinions on sound reasoning rather than blindly following trends or ideologies.

A fundamental way to cultivate critical thinking is to encourage a child's natural curiosity. Children are inherently inquisitive, constantly asking questions about the world around them. Parents and educators can nurture this curiosity by providing thoughtful and detailed answers, prompting children to think deeper about their questions.

Teaching children to ask open-ended questions is another effective strategy. This encourages exploration of various possibilities and thinking more broadly. Questions such as "What do you think would happen if...?" or "Why do you believe this character acted in this way?" stimulate critical thinking and help children develop the ability to consider multiple perspectives.

Children should also be encouraged to develop their argumentative skills. This involves teaching them how to construct logical arguments, support their viewpoints with evidence, and respectfully challenge opposing views. Activities such as debates, discussions, and persuasive writing exercises are beneficial.

In the curriculum

Integrating critical thinking into the educational curriculum is essential. Subjects like Science, Maths, Literature, and Social Studies lend themselves to critical thinking naturally. For instance, in Science, students can design experiments, test hypotheses, and analyse results. In Literature, they can interpret texts, analyse characters' motivations, and explore themes. History classes can focus on evaluating sources, understanding cause and effect, and considering different historical perspectives.

Reflection is a crucial component of critical thinking. Encouraging children to reflect on their learning processes and outcomes helps them understand how they arrived at their conclusions and consider how they might improve. This can be facilitated through reflective journals, where students write about what they learnt, the strategies they used, and what they found challenging.

Modelling critical thinking behaviours is essential for adults. When parents and teachers demonstrate critical thinking in their daily lives, children are more likely to adopt these behaviours. This might involve thinking aloud when solving a problem, discussing how to evaluate information sources, or reflecting on decisions and their outcomes.

Creating a safe and supportive environment for discussion is essential. Children should feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without fear of ridicule or harsh criticism. Encouraging respectful dialogue and valuing diverse perspectives helps children learn to consider different viewpoints.

In the current digital age, media literacy is a crucial component of critical thinking. Children need to learn how to navigate the vast amount of information available online and discern credible sources from unreliable ones. Educators can incorporate lessons on evaluating websites, understanding biases in media, and recognising misinformation.

Cultivating critical thinking from a young age lays the foundation for lifelong learning and effective decision-making. By encouraging inquiry, promoting argumentation, integrating critical thinking into the curriculum, and providing a supportive environment, we help children develop the skills they need to navigate an increasingly complex world. As they grow, these skills will enable them to think independently, evaluate information critically, and contribute meaningfully to society.

The writer is Assistant Professor, Institute of Management, JK Lakshmipat University.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Nilam Patel Bahushrut Foundation SSC Students Scholarship
Eligibility: Open to applicants domiciled in Gujarat or Maharashtra who are classified as hearing-impaired and have completed the SSC exam this June from a regular secondary school in either Maharashtra or Gujarat.
Rewards: Scholarships, prizes, and special awards
Application: Through post to Nilam Patel Bahushrut Foundation 303, Aries Palms, Tower - B 5/6 Shobhana Nagar Vasana Road, Vadodara, 390015 Gujarat, India
Deadline: August 31
www.b4s.in/edge/NPBF3

Corteva Agriscience Scholarship Programme
Eligibility: Female students from Classes 11 or 12 with STEM subjects or in UG, PG or doctoral programmes; Annual family income must be ₹ 6 lakhs or less.
Rewards: For PG students: ₹50,000; for UG students: ₹25,000; for school students: ₹10,000
Application: Online
Deadline: September 13
www.b4s.in/edge/CASP4

INSPIRE Awards MANAK Scheme
Implemented by theDST, Government of India.
Eligibility: Open to students enrolled in Classes 6 to 10 at a recognised school/institution.
Rewards: ₹10,000 one time
Application: Online
Deadline: September 15
www.b4s.in/edge/IAMS3

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

From Page One

Congress says BJP trying to lure MLAs

"BJP brokers are approaching Congress legislators every day. Their sole aim is to destabilise the government. But they will not succeed. We are collecting further evidence, and we will approach the ED," Mr. Gowda told reporters in Mandya on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Medical Education Minister accused the Centre, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, of trying to destabilise non-BJP governments in the country. "You are seeing what they are doing in West Bengal. Since they do not have strength in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, they are not able to do anything. In Karnataka, our legislators are being enticed with money now. Where is the money coming from? The Centre is sponsoring it. Everyone knows that last time too they gave money to 14 legislators in Karnataka," he alleged.

When specifically asked if the luring of legislators had begun in Karnataka, he said: "Our Chief Minister has already told that our legislators are being enticed because he has (police) intelligence." He said he was not aware of the quantum of money being offered. Though Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok claims that such an offer is not being made, internally, it is being done, he added. "Because legislators are not coming, the BJP is misusing the Governor's office. The BJP is unable to digest the fact that it is out of power," he alleged.

Meanwhile, BJP general secretary P. Rajeev has filed a police complaint stating that lies about the party attempting to induce legislators with money are being spread.

INBRIEF

Shivakumar visits Vaishno Devi temple

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar visited Vaishno Devi temple in Jammu and Kashmir along with his wife, Usha, on Sunday.

It may be noted that Mr. Shivakumar had been to Delhi along with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to meet Congress central leaders. After the meeting with AICC leaders, Mr. Shivakumar paid a visit to the temple.

The Deputy Chief Minister will return to Bengaluru on Monday.

Hebbalkar gifts silk sari to Gruha Lakshmi beneficiary

Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar has gifted a silk sari to an elderly woman from Belagavi district who had drawn social media attention after serving her entire village with a *holige* feast using the money she received through the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. Under the scheme, the government pays a fixed amount to the women heads of family every month.

According to a communication from the Minister's office, Ms. Hebbalkar spoke with the woman, Akkathaayi Langoti, from Suttatti village in Raibag taluk of Belagavi district over the phone and hailed her for such a gesture.

The staff of the Minister's office handed over the silk sari to the woman and also felicitated her.

Amid protests, govt. sticks to its stand of holding KAS prelims tomorrow

A section of candidates petitions the Governor seeking postponement of the examination

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Congress and the BJP stuck to their views on holding the KAS gazetted probationers' preliminary examination that is scheduled to be held on Tuesday even as some of the candidates, who resorted to protests demanding postponement, were taken into custody on Sunday.

While some candidates have been demanding three more months to prepare for the examination that is being held after about six years, the BJP has been supporting the candidates' demand for rescheduling the examination. However, the government has stuck to its stand of going ahead with the schedule.

In a note, Additional Chief Secretary and Finance Secretary L.K. Atheeq said a small group of candidates has been bombarding officials of the Karnataka Public Service Commission, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, and Chief Minister's Office with calls and WhatsApp messages to get the exam postponed. "Sometimes, I am even forced to keep my phone on flight mode," he said.

BJP Yuva Morcha office-bearers, including its national president Tejasvi Surya, MP, and a few KAS candidates submitting a petition to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Postponed many times'

Stating that the exam has been postponed many times due to various reasons, he said, "There is an effort to portray that there is a scam in the KPSC. If we succumb to the lobby, about 2.5 lakh candidates will face injustice. Enough time has been given to them who have crossed the age limit and also to receive applications from those who had appeared in the 2017-2018 examination."

Mr. Atheeq said as per the February 25 notification, the exam was scheduled for May 5, which was postponed to July 21 due to elections. He said though it was decided to hold the exam on July 7, it was postponed since it would clash with the UPSC examination. "Because the government provided an opportunity to those who had crossed the age limit to apply, the exam was postponed to August 25. After discussion at the CMO, it was again postponed, and the KPSC decided to hold it on August 27."

"The whole process shows that enough time has been given to candidates. There are no Sundays in the next two months that are free for holding the exams. Each time that exam is scheduled, ₹4 crore to ₹5 crore is spent. If it's postponed, the question paper has to be destroyed because of chances of a paper leak."

A section of the candidates, along with BJP Yuva Morcha national president and MP Tejaswi Surya, met Governor Thaawarchand Gelhot and petitioned him for the postponement of the exam.

Charge on police

Meanwhile, the BJP accused Vijayanagar police of assaulting its workers who were protesting the arrest of candidates. "If the Congress continues with its authoritarian attitude of muzzling protest through police, it will be responded appropriately," BJP State unit president B.Y. Vijayendra said on social media platform X.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok said the Congress government's move to arrest the candidates who were protesting peacefully is the murder of democracy. "The government representatives should immediately meet the protesting candidates and convince them to withdraw the protest. Trust should be instilled by meeting their demand," he said on X.

Land to JSW: We are only implementing BJP govt.'s decision, says M.B. Patil

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Launching a counter-attack at the BJP that has taken serious exception to the Congress government executing the sale deed of 3,666 acres of land in favour of JSW Steel Ltd., Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil on Sunday maintained that the State Cabinet had only decided to implement the order issued on May 6, 2021 during the B.S. Yediyurappa-led BJP government.

In a press release, Mr. Patil also pointed out that there was a High Court directive on March 12, 2024, following which the Cabinet decided to execute the sale deed. He said there was no irregularity in the State government's decision to execute the sale deed. Mr. Patil dismissed Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Aravind Bellad's allegations of an internal agreement in the matter as baseless. "If there is any internal agreement, it must be within his own party (BJP)," he remarked.

> Our government has not extended any concessions to Jindal Steel, unlike the BJP government which granted concessions to Chanakya University.
>
> **M.B. PATIL,**
> Large and Medium Industries Minister

The Minister explained that Jindal company had approached the High Court as the order issued by Mr. Yediyurappa's government had not been implemented. The court subsequently directed that the order be followed, and accordingly, the present government had taken the decision, he said.

He further noted that JSW Steel had invested ₹90,000 crore in the State, creating 50,000 jobs. Mr. Patil maintained that failing to execute the lease-cum-sale deed, even after compliance with the government's terms, would send a wrong message to investors.

"Our government has not extended any concessions to Jindal Steel, unlike the BJP government which granted concessions to Chanakya University," the Minister said. He added that the land price for JSW Steel was determined based on the market value that prevailed 20 years ago.

Mr. Patil alleged, "The erstwhile BJP government gave 116 acres of the KIADB land to Chanakya University at a significant concession. The real value of that land amounts to ₹187 crore. This resulted in a loss of ₹137 crore to the exchequer. Moreover, this amount has not yet been remitted to the KIADB."

OBC, Dalit religious heads offer moral support to CM

Members of the Federation of Seers from Backward Classes and Oppressed Sections met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRAMGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Mahadevappa says Siddaramaiah may not quit even if the HC verdict on MUDA issue is adverse

After the Congress high command backed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his defence over the allegation of irregularities in the allotment of sites to his wife by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), a group of seers heading the mutts that have following among the backward classes and Dalits on Sunday offered moral support to the embattled Chief Minister.

While the Chief Minister and the Congress are in the midst of their fight against the allegation, his close aide Social Welfare Minister H.C. Mahadevappa on Sunday indicated that Mr. Siddaramaiah may not resign even if the Karnataka High Court's ruling on August 29, with respect to the sanction granted by the Governor to probe into the alleged irregularities, remains adverse.

'Sinister designs'

The group of 10 seers representing the Federation of Seers from Backward Classes and Oppressed Sections met the Chief Minister offering unconditional moral support to him. They also promised to fight the "sinister designs" of the Raj Bhavan to destabilise the government. Those who were in the delegation included Niranan-jaananda Mahaswami of Kanaka Peetha, Kaginele; Shanthaveera Mahaswami of Sri Jagadguru Kunchitiga Mahasamsthana Mutt, Hosadurga; Immadi Siddarameshwara Swami of Bhovi Gurupeetha, Chitradruga, and Basavamurthy Madara Chennaiah Mahaswami of Madara Chennaiah Gurupeetha, Chitradurga.

Meanwhile, when asked if the Chief Minister would have to resign if the High Court's verdict remains adverse, Dr. Mahadevappa, a long-time friend of Mr. Siddaramaiah, said: "Such a question does not arise since there is no material of his involvement in the MUDA issue. He has no role in MUDA." He said that legal experts never said anything about the position of the Chief Minister in the case.

Asked if there would be a question of morality, he said: "There is no question of morality since he has no role in the case. There is neither nepotism nor money involvement in the case and the Governor's decision is politically motived."

'No leadership change'

On rumours about the impending change in leadership, the Social Welfare Minister said: "There is no discussion on the leadership. The Congress high command is standing behind the Chief Minister. There is no question of a new chief ministerial candidate being discussed. The post is not vacant. There is no difference among Congress leaders, specifically among Ahinda leaders. Everyone remains united. All the talk on change of leadership is just a rumour."

'NDA will announce bypoll candidates in a few days'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

JD(S) State Youth Wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Sunday said the BJP high command was set to announce the names of NDA candidates for the byelections to the State Assembly within a few days.

He told mediapersons here that a report on the situation in Channapatna constituency had reached the BJP high command.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

In confrontation mode

The Congress government in Karnataka seems to be in a confrontation mode with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot after the latter sanctioned the prosecution of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). Already, non-BJP governments in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Kerala have had face-offs with the Governors on issues related to the appointment of vice-chancellors, giving consent to the Bills passed by the legislature, and law and order. Karnataka seems to be joining the list of States wherein the governments and the Governors are involved in confrontation on various matters.

The Congress held State-wide protests against the Governor's decision to allow the prosecution of the Chief Minister. In the latest case, the Congress took exception to the Governor's refusal to give assent to 11 Bills. Nine out of the 11 Bills were sent back to the government in the last one month. Also, some Bills have been returned by the Raj Bhavan twice, according to sources. A truce between the two authorities would augur well to ensure smooth functioning of public administration.

Ready to wash CM's feet

BJP's Shivamogga MLA S.N. Channabasappa *(in picture)* is apparently ready to wash the feet of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah if the latter comes out clean in the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) to his wife.

The MLA demanded the resignation of the Chief Minister to face the prosecution sanctioned by the Governor and asked, "Why should he be afraid of prosecution if he has not done anything wrong?"

He was speaking at a rally in Shivamogga as part of the State-wide protests organised by his party seeking the resignation of Mr. Siddaramaiah in the alleged MUDA scam.

The MLA's statement did surprise many in Shivamogga who are familiar with his off-the-cuff and often thoughtless statements. Back in 2015, Mr. Channabasappa, who was then a member of the Shivamogga City Corporation council, had shocked all by saying he would unleash violence on Mr. Siddaramaiah if he dared to consume beef in the city.

Caught in the act

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) awareness drive through publicity in the media and public announcements on waste disposal seems to be getting some traction. A few days ago, a marshal appointed by the BBMP caught a two-wheeler rider throwing waste in a plastic bag on Kalpana Chawla Road at Sanjaynagar in Bengaluru. The marshal asked the person, who tried to flee, to take back the plastic bag from where he had thrown it on the road. The marshal took a photograph of the number plate of the vehicle and warned that a penalty of ₹25,000 would be levied if he refused to follow the rule. It was then that the bike-borne man turned docile and picked back the garbage he had thrown.

Nagesh Prabhu
Sathish G.T.
C.K. Suryanarayana

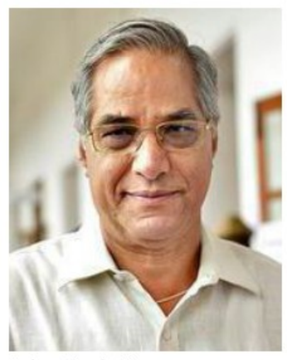
BJP MP questions allotment of land to Kharge family-run trust

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has now trained its guns at All-India Congress Committee president M. Mallikarjun Kharge and taken exception to the reported allotment of a site by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board to a trust owned by his family.

At Aerospace Park

In a social media post on Sunday, BJP Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya referred to a report about Mr. Kharge's family-run trust being allotted five acres of land under the SC quota in the Hitech Defence Aerospace Park near Bengaluru.



Lahar Singh Siroya

Wondering if this was not misuse of power, nepotism, and conflict of interest, he wanted to know how Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil consented to this allotment in March 2024.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya wonders if this is not misuse of power, nepotism, and conflict of interest

The matter has also reached the Karnataka Governor's office, he said and wondered if this would be probed.

'Will they give it up'

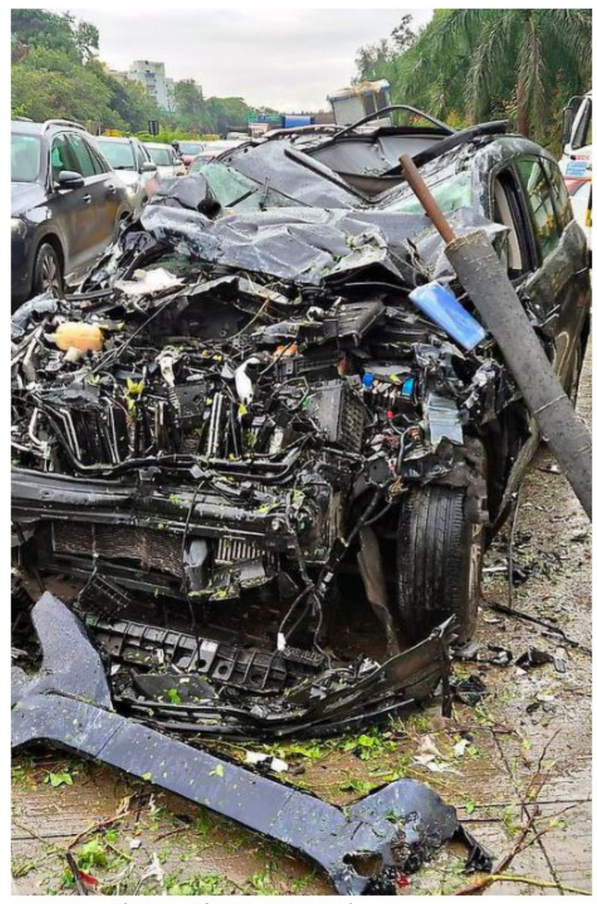
Maintaining that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah may have to give up the sites allotted by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority, he wondered if the Kharge family too would have to give up this land.

Mounting accidents on tolled roads in Bengaluru: Blame it on poor design too

Ninety-two fatal accidents were recorded between 2022 and June 2024 on NICE road. The police attributed most of these to reckless driving and speeding

Rasheed Kappan
BENGALURU

An ambulance lost control and fell on a slope in the middle of NICE road in Bengaluru. The driver suffered minor injuries. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH


A car met with an accident on NICE road.

Fancy motorbikes and cars, access-controlled roads, a fixation with signal-free corridors... This perfect recipe for ultra-high speeds without stringent road safety standards has pushed Bengaluru beyond the deep red danger mark. Road accidents claimed an alarming 991 lives in the city last year, and this figure is not going anywhere south in 2024. Why aren't the alarm bells ringing?

Yes, mounting fatalities have finally pushed the city police to fix a speed limit on the access-controlled NICE road and ban two-wheelers between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. But beyond reckless riding and driving, a big question mark hangs over poor road design as well. The unacceptably high number of accidents on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway soon after its launch, should have been a wake-up call.

Ninety-two fatal accidents were recorded between 2022 and June 2024 on NICE road. The police attributed most of these to reckless driving and speeding. But what if the road design had enough safety features integrated to minimise these accidents?

Exclusion of local road-users

To understand these safety structures, there is a need to question the assumption on which the 'access-controlled' mega highways such as NICE road and the Expressway are designed. As Chetan Sodaye, Program Manager, Integrated Transport and Road Safety, World Resources Institute (WRI) points out, only a particular set of users are 'assumed' to take these highways. "It excludes other road users from villages that the corridor cuts through. This creates conflict points," he notes.

Inevitably, in the absence of any safe way to cut across the corridor, local vehicles get onto the high-speed motorway triggering accidents. This, Chetan says, is not foreseen in the corridors' Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and the design does not integrate ways to bypass the problem. The solution is to first identify the local need for access right at the planning stage, and provision foot over bridges or even grade separators.

Rumble strips

Drivers approaching these identified crossing points could be alerted through strategic placement of rumble strips, a traffic-calming feature. "Multiple signages could also warn the driver that something is coming up. It is critical to make drivers aware of the corridor's designed speed and the need to slow down at spots known for potential counter movements," adds Chetan.

The road design often fails to anticipate the trend of wrong-side driving, acknowledged as the cause of many accidents. "If the need for such an access that leads to wrong-side driving / riding is identified, a service road stretch with two-way movement at low speeds could be allowed. This can have multiple speed humps and raised crossings for pedestrians."

Robust road engineering can nip accidents in the bud. But this mandates coordination between the agencies that build the roads and related infrastructure and the city traffic police. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Traffic-East, Kuldeep Singh Jain flags gaps in consultation. "No one consults us and no one knows actually where the real problem could be, and what could lead to what," he notes.

The agency concerned might have applied basic road engineering principles to ensure safety. "But when the traffic moves, then we suddenly realise the problems. That is when the actual interaction starts," says the officer.

The city police have speed gun detectors on the Airport Corridor and the NICE road now. But this needs sufficient space, says Kuldeep. "We have determined speed limits for different categories of vehicles, right from two-wheelers to heavy vehicles. Fines are collected based on the category," he informs.

High-end, high-capacity motorcycles pose a problem of speed. So do electric vehicles that are less than 50CC, he says. "Basically, they are treated in the category of bicycles. They don't wear helmets, and come in the opposite direction. We can't fine or stop them. These add to our challenges."

To enhance safety, the police are enforcing strict lane discipline on these access-controlled corridors. "It is not easy to implement this everywhere in Bengaluru. But we are doing it on these high density and elevated corridors where it is implementable," explains Kuldeep.

Segregate vehicles

But the police should segregate slow-moving and fast-moving vehicles, says traffic and transportation analyst M.N. Sreehari. He elaborates, "Separate lanes should be created, not by demarcating with paint. They should install some kind of physical barrier. Even fast-moving vehicles should not be allowed to go beyond 60-80kmph on urban roads, which were designed for 40-60kmph only." Since the police are equipped with a big number of speed cameras, the focus should be on young motorcyclists in the age group of 20-25 years performing 'wheelies' and other stunts endangering every other road-user. "Their vehicles should be confiscated. The RTOs should cancel their licenses like in many other countries. Here, the government is happily sleeping over this issue."

As Chetan reminds, many speedsters have learnt to game the system by spotting the cameras on Google Maps. "This is a tactic to avoid fines. Maybe our road infrastructure could be designed in a way that you cannot go beyond the speed limit. That is the free flow speed."

Reduce high 'Free-flow speed'

The 'Free-flow speed' (FFS) is the average speed that a motorist would travel if there were no congestion or other adverse conditions. "Sadly, our infrastructure is heavily designed for very high FFS but the signage reminds that this is still an 80kmph corridor. You design a road where the speed can go even 180kmph, you have a vehicle that can throttle to that speed," he notes.

If the intention is to build the road for 80kmph, the design itself should not allow you to go beyond that speed. "On Mumbai Pune highway, there is a forced deflection on the road, then automatically drivers will be forced not to go beyond a speed. This is more enforceable than mere speed cameras."

Additional Director General of Police, M.A. Saleem, who had headed the overall management of the city traffic for years, insists that there can be no compromise with enforcement of speed limits. "Any small mistake can be very fatal for all road-users. Speed limits have to be properly enforced on access-controlled roads. We have a good number of toll booths, where the violators can be flagged and their vehicles detained."

The toll boost is also the ideal place to watch the violations caught on camera, detain the vehicle and challan the violator. As he explains, "Many vehicles on NICE road, for instance, may not be from the city. They may be heading to Kerala or Tamil Nadu. It would be very difficult to send them notices and ensure payment of penalties. Challan them before they go out of the radar."

'World of Microbiome' event in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Leucine Rich Bio Pvt Ltd, a microbiome company recently hosted the 'World of Microbiome' event to commemorate its 10th anniversary. As the recipient of the prestigious National Startup Award, Leucine Rich Bio has been at the forefront of microbiome research and innovation in the region.

The inaugural 'World of Microbiome' event marked a pioneering milestone in the dynamic and rapidly evolving field of microbiome research. It provided a platform for leading experts, doctors, scientists, and entrepreneurs to engage in insightful discussions and share their knowledge on the latest advancements in microbiome research, said a press release. Prof. Saumitra Das, Chairman of the Microbiology and Cell Biology Department at the IISc, addressed on the importance of genomics and microbiome research in improving scientific knowledge. He emphasized the necessity of strong academic-industry partnerships in addressing today's critical scientific concerns.

Six-year-old diagnosed with scoliosis undergoes complex robot-assisted surgery in a private hospital

Initially, the curvature of her spine measured 20 degrees, but by 2024, it had progressed to 50 degrees, threatening her already compromised lung function

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

She was hospitalised for most part of her first year and the ICU became her home.

Born with congenital heart and lung issues, Anaisha Aery has faced more challenges in her six short years than most experience in a lifetime. She was hospitalised for most part of her first year and the ICU became her home as doctors worked tirelessly to stabilise her fragile health.

With such a difficult start to life, her parents knew that the child's development might be delayed, but they were hopeful to give her every chance to thrive and overcome her situation.

By two years of age, the child was diagnosed with scoliosis. Initially, the curvature of her spine measured 20 degrees, but by 2024, it had progressed to 50 degrees, threatening her already compromised lung function. The situation seemed bleak, and after consulting multiple surgeons, the family faced a difficult decision. Traditional spinal fusion surgery for scoliosis carried the risk of stunting her growth. Hesitant to go ahead with it, her parents began to lose hope, fearing they were running out of options.

Invasive alternative

In their search for a less invasive alternative, they consulted S. Vidyadhara, head of the department of Spine Surgery and Consultant - Robotic Spine Surgeon at Manipal Hospital Old Airport Road in Bengaluru. The doctor suggested that the growing rods technique is a safer option for the six-year-old. This advanced, robot-assisted procedure aimed to relieve the pressure on her lungs caused by the scoliosis, preserving her respiratory function.

Subsequently, she underwent a complex four-hour procedure on July 22. However, a complication arose while inserting a second rod, leading to temporary paralysis of her right leg. Dr. Vidyadhara said passing the screws and rods in a six-year-old child is a challenge as the pedicles (a stem or stalk of tissue that connects parts of the body to each other) are 3-4 mm diameter and the screws are of 4.5 mm diameter. "The robotic guidance allows us to insert the implants exactly in the middle of the pedicle so that the plasticity of pedicles in children allows its expansion to accommodate bigger screws," the doctor said.

Intra-operative signal

"The child developed intra-operative signal loss on the right side upon distraction which was picked up by intra-operative multimodal neuromonitoring and the right sided implants were removed and the neurology recovered.

Now with physiotherapy she is regaining her ability to sit stand and walk slowly with support," the doctor said.

"She will need to come back for annual growth rod distraction till 11-12 years of age until the spine has ability to grow and then undergo final definitive fusion," the doctor added.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 26, 1974

Farms Corp. Makes Rs. 1.3 Crore Profit

Bangalore, Aug. 25: Mr. M.R. Krishna, MP, Chairman, State Farms Corporation of India, said here to-day that the Government, while trying to bring about better co-ordination between research institutions such as ICAR, IARI and organisations like the National Seeds Corporation and the State Farms Corporation, should ensure that the progress of the State Farms Corporation was not hampered.

Talking to pressmen, Mr. Krishna explained that the Corporation's activities. The National Seeds Corporation was a certification agency and could not itself become the production agency. The States were starting their own seed Corporations and certification agencies. The Government while trying to bring about closer contacts among these agencies should avoid doing anything which would hamper the functioning of the State Farms Corporation formed in 1969.

Alleged Smuggling of Rice

Kolar Gold Fields, Aug. 25: The Kamasamudram police seized 54 bags of rice, 24 bags of maize and one bag of ragi valued at Rs. 20,000 which were allegedly being smuggled out of Karnataka into Tamil Nadu in a lorry and ten bullock carts. The lorry driver and the cleaners were arrested and the lorry was seized.

In another case, the village panchayat Chairman of Doddapannadally detained six bullock carts which were alleged to be carrying rice out of Karnataka into Tamil Nadu and informed the police. On information, the Kamasamudram police arrested the cart.

CITYBEATS

Off to the market

ONGOING
Artisan Bazaar, an exhibition and sale of artefacts is on at Chitrakala Parishat. On display there will be puja and decorative items for the upcoming Gowri and Ganesha festivals with artefacts, handlooms and more. Also available are Kashmiri shawls, bedspreads from Jaipur, Kanjivaram silk saris etc.
The bazaar is on till September 1

Art for a cause

ONGOING
Conrad Bengaluru is organising An Art Soiree by Badrunissa Irfan. Proceeds from the show will go towards charity. The works are centred on the kaleidoscopic images of nature and life as manifestations of the divine and glorify their immeasurable greatness.
At Conrad Bengaluru, Kensington Road, Halasuru. Entry is free.

Hello Turkey

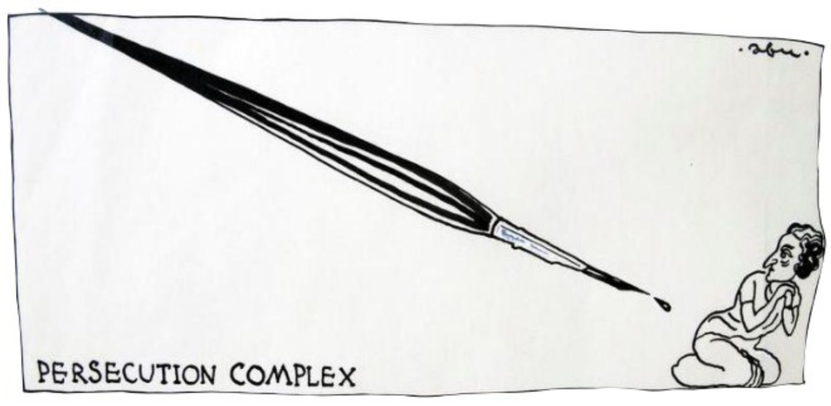
ONGOING
Treat yourself to a Turkish spread which include kaymak with honey, food with eastern Türkiye spices, kunafa, and brews such as Çai, the traditional Turkish tea, Mıhlama, a traditional Turkish dish from the Black Sea region, cooked with cornmeal, butter and local melting cheese, among others.
At Öz by Kebapci, UB City, till August 31.

A view from the ringside

Abu's World, an exhibition of works by political cartoonist Abu Abraham, will be on display in Bengaluru this weekend

Ruth Dhanaraj

Making a point Illustrations by Abu Abraham, the artist (below). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Abu Abraham was born on June 11, 1924, and his career as a cartoonist progressed alongside India's as a nation. Having worked with foreign and Indian publications during a career that spanned six decades, Abu was uniquely placed to chronicle events as they unfolded in a world that was rebuilding itself post colonialism.

"Since this is the centenary year of his birth, we thought it would be great to bring his cartoons out again – to be revisited by people who knew him and serve as an introduction to those who didn't," says Ayisha Abraham, his Bengaluru-based daughter who curated the show.

"I have been housing his work ever since he passed away in 2002. Abu kept everything that he drew, including the rough drafts and would insist editors return his sketches after they were published. He knew the value of original artwork."

"Though we have done exhibitions in the past, this one is unique because we will be displaying a lot of work that has not been seen previously, especially those from the early years. It also traces his evolution as an artist and as a person. Viewers can also see the corrections he has made on his drafts," she adds.

The exhibition has both a personal voice and a national one with historian Janaki Nair penning texts about the socio-political climate of the time. "He always donned the hat of a journalist, but his tool and his word of communication was his drawings," says Ayisha.

"He sketched all the prominent people of his time. It was an era when political cartoons played an important role in newspapers, by making a comment which was a visual analysis of sorts which could be accessed by more people."

While a photograph captures a fleeting moment for posterity, an illustration not only depicts an expression, but also its underlying sentiment. Abu was an avid reader and traveller, who could capture the petulance of the leader or their smugness or stubborness with clean strokes of his pen.

"He had a tremendous sense of observation and off the cuff, he would be standing there, drawing and getting it right. He followed all the major figures of his time and had a deep understanding of political values. He used his privileges both as a journalist and as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha to reproduce what he saw transpire around him. His was not a gaze from afar, but one embedded in that reality," adds Ayisha.

According to Ayisha, Abu had a strong sense of being Indian. Though he left Kerala at the age of 17, his life was shaped growing up there and he eventually returned, spending his latter years in Thiruvananthapuram.

After his return to Kerala, Abu's became a bit more philosophical rather than political, influenced by a more calming, sedate atmosphere. He began contributing a weekly column, accompanied by a small drawing to regional papers.

"He sketched everyday – not just people, but marketplaces and landscapes too – always in black and white, never colour. Abu worked with a pentel pen on paper, later tracing a final version on translucent paper using India ink and a Chinese brush. Even in the latter part of his life, he would write at least one column a week as a political commentator."

Ayisha began working towards this show in November last year, shortlisting sketches from a huge body of work specific to each state, apart from those with a national interest. With over 100 works on display, the show will also include his columns, notebooks and sketchbooks. She says plans are underway to immortalise his illustrations in a book.

The show, supported by the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi, also had walkthroughs and a panel discussion on Sunday. The speakers at the discussion included cartoonists EP Unny and Gokul Gopalakrishnan, and journalists Rohini Mohan and AS Panneerselvan, who were joined by historian Janaki Nair as the moderator.

Abu's World which has already been to Kochi and Kolkata, goes to Delhi in November. The show will be on display at BIC till August 26. Entry is free.

FILM REVIEW

Quirky characters and a unique dramedy

Vivek MV

In fits and starts Stills from *Powder*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kannada cinema has had directors approaching comedy in different ways. If one looks at the start of the millennium, Yogaraj Bhat thrived with his refreshing dialogues that reflected the carefree attitude of youngsters. Not many could replicate the magic Bhat weaved over the college-going crowd.

Guruprasad arrived as a surprise and gave a distinct touch to his two dark comedies starring Jaggesh: *Mata* and *Eddelu Manjunatha*. In the early 90s, people enjoyed the unmistakable flavour of comedy in Anant Nag's *Ganesha* series. And in the 80s, Kashinath made heads turn with his uncompromising approach to sex comedies.

Apart from some filmmakers who came as a welcome change to revive the genre, comedy in Kannada cinema in the last two decades has suffered from stereotypical handling of humour. Sadhu Kokila continues to play unbearable loud characters while not so long ago, Rangayana Raghu would get wasted in poorly-written, exaggerated humour.

The dry spell of good comedy dramas in the Kannada film industry ended with *Hostel Hudugaru Bekagiddare* in 2023, a campus drama that broke new grounds in production. And hot on its heels, *Powder,* directed by Janardhan Chikkanna and written by Deepak Venkateshan isn't your regular comedy drama.

Soorya (Diganth) works at a supermarket in Mysuru, and he shares a room with Karan (Anirudh Acharya). Soorya is trying to woo back his ex, Nithya (Dhanya Ramkumar), a nurse. The trio learns about the presence of drugs worth crores stuffed inside talcum powder containers inside Soorya's store.

They decide to turn rich overnight by selling the drugs, and that brings them into confrontation with drug dealer Annachi (Rangayana Raghu) and his rival Sulemaan (Gopalkrishna Deshpande). The drug racket has an international connection, with a drug lord from China calling the shots.

The fact that the humour is generated from the idiosyncratic behaviour of the film's characters rather than overt reliance on dialogues is a plus. In fact, the film does not go overboard with its dialogues, and Trilok Trivikram's witty lines provide the right effect thanks to their perfect timing in the scenes. Despite suffering from a pacing issue, *Powder is never* boring, and successfuly swings like a pendulum between quirky and adult comedy.

Powder (Kannada)
Director: Janardhan Chikkanna
Cast: Diganth, Dhanya Ramkumar, Rangayana Raghu, Gopalkrishna Deshpande, Anirudh Acharya, Sharmiela Mandre
Runtime: 130 minutes
Storyline: Three people in a small town try to become rich overnight by selling illegal powder smuggled in talcum powder bottles.

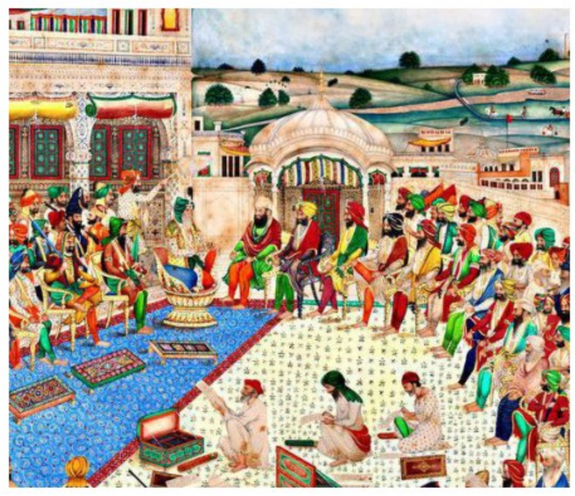
Sharmeila Mandre is striking with her action moves as 'Makeup' Mallika, a dangerous assassin who can kill people with makeup materials. Rangayana Raghu and Gopalkrishna Deshpande shine as the poles-apart drug dealers, with the former being hilarious with his Tamil-mixed Kannada.

Even if *Powder* does not insult the idea of a comic caper with excessive ideas, it fails to be a laugh riot. The less-eventful first half feels like a lost opportunity, even if Diganth salvages it with his depiction of a naive youngster.

Powder springs to life in the second half, and the episode showing the hunt for the talcum powder containers is a hoot. Nagabhushana, as the spoof of a popular Kannada YouTuber, delivers the knockout punch.

Director Janardhan Chikkanna and his technical teams triumph in the last 15 minutes. Expectedly, characters hallucinate, and bizarre things begin to unfold. The director's visual style – helped by cinematographers Advaitha Gurumurthy and Shanthi Sagar H G – to present this psychedelic world is impressive. Even if the impact of the visual effects is a bit overwhelming, you are left astounded at the efforts behind it.

Powder is currently running in theatres



Exploring the royal Sikh legacy

Step back in time and explore the legacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the visionary who forged the Sikh Empire.

On August 30, curator and collector Davinder Toor will present a special edition of Insider's View at the Museum of Art and Photography, offering an exclusive introduction to the exhibition 'Sikh, Warrior, King'.

This event delves into the life of Ranjit Singh, who united the Punjab region following years of Afghan invasions, establishing a powerful empire known for its prosperous trade, vibrant arts, and formidable military.

The exhibition features nearly 100 artworks, including exquisite jewellery and weaponry from the Sikh Empire, bringing to life a golden era of history.

Toor, a leading figure in Sikh, Indian, and Islamic art, will guide participants through key narratives and featured pieces, offering unique insights into this fascinating period. His expertise is widely recognised, with consultancies to the British Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Wallace Collection.

Participants would gain a deeper understanding of the Sikh Empire's enduring legacy through the eyes of a passionate collector and historian.

On August 30, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Museum of Art and Photography. Free entry, but registration is required.

Kerala to hold post-disaster needs assessment in Wayanad

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government is all set to begin a post-disaster needs assessment in the landslides-affected areas in the Meppadi grama panchayat in Wayanad from Monday.

The objective is to assess the damage and define a strategy for recovery and reconstruction, including an estimation of financial costs across the affected sectors.

For receiving the Central fund meant for recovery and reconstruction of the affected region, such an exercise is mandatory. The State will frame a detailed report after a week-long assessment and submit it to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which, in turn, will forward it to the Union Home Ministry. The Home Ministry normally takes a call on providing assistance to the affected States through the recovery and reconstruction window of the NDMA, said Sekhar Kuriakose, Member-Secretary, Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA).

Devastating impact: According to the State government, the landslides on July 30 left 231 people dead. AFP

Report to be submitted

The PDNA team constituted for each sector will estimate the overall impact of the disaster on the lives, livelihoods, and property of the affected communities and assess the loss and damage under the social, productive, health, infrastructure, tourism, livelihoods, forest and environment, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) sectors, integrating gender and tribal inclusion. The team will conduct a comprehensive assessment after a six-day field visit and submit a report to the Centre.

The total landslides-affected area is estimated to be 86,000 square metres over a stretch of eight kilometres. The PDNA exercise will be led by the State government, and supported by the NDMA, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), and other agencies. The report will present sector-wise damage. Cost estimates of all the damage will be included in the report.

The Principal Secretary, Disaster Management, and the State Relief Commissioner will oversee the process, while member secretary, KSDMA, will supervise the State-level officers.

Body parts recovered

Six body parts were recovered during a comprehensive search operation at the Anadikkappu and Soochippara waterfalls areas on Sunday, renewing hopes of bringing closure to the families of those missing in the landslides in Wayanad on July 30.

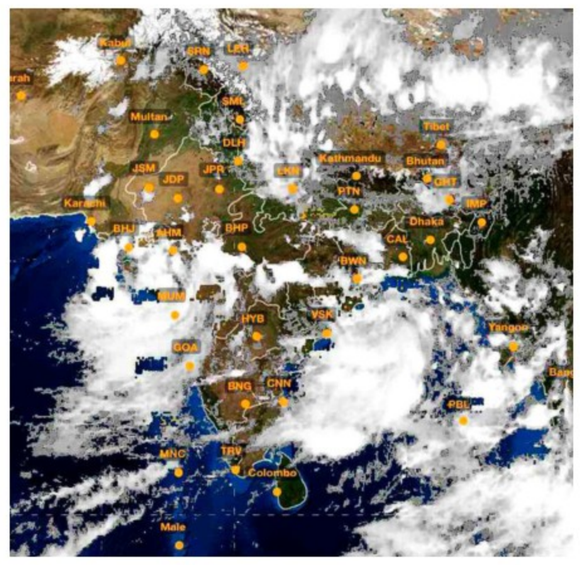
The search was intensified on Sunday following an emotional appeal by survivors at a meeting convened by the Chief Secretary recently. Two teams, each of 14 members from the National Disaster Response Force, Special Operations Group, Fire and Rescue Services, Forest Department and voluntary organisations, scoured the areas from 6 a.m.

Till now, 119 people remain missing, while 231 have been confirmed dead, according to the district administration.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has called for an online all-party meeting at 4.30 p.m. on August 29 to discuss a comprehensive rehabilitation project for the survivors. (*With inputs from Wayanad*)

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall with extremely heavy falls at isolated places over south Rajasthan, Madhya Maharashtra, Gujarat; Thunderstorm accompanied with lighting and gusty winds (speed reaching 40-50 kmph) very likely at isolated places over Rajasthan

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	8.0	31.0	26.0	Kozhikode	—	33.0	27.0
Ahmedabad	0.5	29.0	25.0	Kurnool	—	29.0	24.0
Aizawl	11.0	27.0	22.0	Lucknow	—	35.0	26.0
Allahabad	—	35.0	26.0	Madurai	—	38.0	25.0
Bengaluru	—	29.0	21.0	Mangaluru	4.0	29.0	24.0
Bhopal	112.4	29.0	24.0	Mumbai	—	30.0	24.0
Bhubaneswar	1.1	32.0	25.0	Mysuru	—	31.0	20.0
Chandigarh	8.0	35.0	26.0	New Delhi	0.2	34.0	25.0
Chennai	—	37.0	28.0	Patna	—	34.0	27.0
Coimbatore	—	38.0	27.0	Port Blair	0.4	32.0	26.0
Dehradun	—	33.0	24.0	Puducherry	—	37.0	27.0
Gangtok	17.0	23.0	18.0	Pune	—	27.0	21.0
Goa	112	30.0	26.0	Raipur	5.2	30.0	24.0
Guwahati	—	37.0	26.0	Ranchi	16.0	29.0	22.0
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shillong	—	23.0	17.0
Hyderabad	1.0	30.0	23.0	Shimla	11.0	24.0	16.0
Imphal	15.0	29.0	21.0	Srinagar	—	32.0	17.0
Jaipur	—	28.0	24.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.0	25.0
Kochi	0.2	30.0	26.0	Tiruchi	—	37.0	28.0
Kohima	6.0	24.0	18.0	Vijayawada	—	31.0	26.0
Kolkata	19.0	29.0	26.0	Visakhapatnam	4.0	28.0	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.35	.19	.13	32	57	
Bengaluru	.16	.27	.71	—	104	
Chennai	.5	.4	.28	17	81	
Delhi	.6	109	.45	79	124	
Hyderabad	.16	.9	.26	30	73	
Kolkata	.11	.32	.29	54	62	
Lucknow	.14	.7	.11	76	59	
Mumbai	.—	.3	188	15	—	
Pune	.7	.17	.26	48	41	
Visakhapatnam	.9	.44	.21	43	96	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 285 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Davanagere, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 18

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Two arrested in ₹175-crore online scam in Hyderabad

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Police in Hyderabad arrested two persons for their alleged involvement in a ₹175-crore online fraud.

Mohammed Shoeb Tauqeer, 34, and Mahmood Bin Ahmed Bawazir, 49, were arrested on Saturday.

"The data analysis team identified suspicious activity linked to six bank accounts in SBI at Shamsheergunj branch. Further probe revealed nearly 600 complaints linked to these accounts," said the officials in a press release.

'MeToo' moment in Malayalam film industry puts LDF govt. on back foot

State govt. forms a team led by women IPS officers to probe accusations of sexual abuse; CPI(M) says right-wing media and Opposition have launched witch-hunt against LDF; two persons in key leadership roles in the industry have quit their posts

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The first-person "disclosures" of alleged sexual misconduct by those at the apex of the Malayalam film industry appeared to have forced the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government into the firefighting mode.

On Sunday, arguably keeling over under pressure from the Opposition, civil society and from within the ruling front, the government abandoned its earlier stance, and constituted a special team led by women IPS officers to investigate the accusations of sexual abuse that surfaced on mainstream and social media.

The startling developments seemingly forced the government to confront the possibility that more discreditable and embarrassing facts, which could reveal fresh cognisable offences, shatter reputations, and dismantle myths surrounding icons of Malayalam cinema, might emerge in the public domain, further backfooting the administration.

Pinarayi Vijayan

For at least a week, the LDF government appeared unable to decide on what standard of evidence it should use to hold prominent personalities legally accountable for their alleged misdemeanours. However, Mollywood's "MeToo" moment seemed to be a tipping point. The disclosures also rattled the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA).

So far, the revelations have cost two persons in significant leadership roles in the industry their posts and cast a ruling front legislator and a Minister under suspicion, putting the leaders in the cross hairs of Opposition parties.

Moreover, the Congress and the BJP have launched an agitation demanding Culture Minister Saji Cherian's resignation.

CPI(M) State secretary M.V. Govindan countered by stating that the right-wing media and the Opposition have launched a witch-hunt against the LDF government. He said the government's critics should recognise that the K. Hema Committee was a watershed in the history of women's rights in Kerala.

Telangana in favour of holistic resolution of disputes on power dues with Andhra Pradesh

M. Rajeev
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is in favour of a holistic resolution of disputes relating to power dues with the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh for maintaining good inter-State relations and ensuring fair financial dealings in line with the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has requested the Union government to facilitate a comprehensive settlement of all power-related disputes, potentially through mediation as suggested by the High Court, rather than focusing solely on isolated issues. The request assumes significance as the dispute over power dues between the two Telugu States have been pending for more than a decade as the two States remain firm on their respective stance.

Telangana Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has urged the Centre to facilitate settlement of all power-related disputes. FILE PHOTO

While Andhra Pradesh has been insisting that Telangana power utilities had dues of ₹6,756 crore to its power utilities, Telangana is firm that the former's dues come to ₹24,132 crore.

The Telangana government explained that unilateral cancellation of power purchase agreements by Andhra Pradesh power distribution companies and cessation of power supply to Telangana by A.P. Genco had imposed a heavy burden on the State exchequer on account of power purchases and A.P. should reimburse the dues.

The Deputy Chief Minister reportedly requested the Centre to adopt a balanced approach that considers all claims and counterclaims by the two States to ensure that neither State is unduly disadvantaged. This comprehensive approach will strengthen federal cooperation and help avoid prolonged legal disputes, he explained to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday.

Mr. Bhatti Vikramarka sought reimbursement of excess liability of ₹1,052.7 crore allocated to the Telangana Power Finance Corporation by A.P. contrary to the Reorganisation Act. "Telangana has paid ₹1,270 crore [principal and interest] under protest representing the excess liability," he said, requesting the Finance Minister to ensure that A.P. Power Finance Corporation reimburse Telangana for the excess liability.

Andhra Pradesh govt. lays focus on increasing forest cover

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

After the formation of the NDA coalition government in Andhra Pradesh, the Forest Department has laid renewed emphasis on increasing the forest cover from the present 29.23% to more than 33%.

The ideal percentage of total geographical area under forest should be at least 33% for maintaining ecological stability, as per the National Forest Policy.

With a Notified Forest Area (NFA) of approximately 8,030 square kilometers and 'trees outside' spread in 688 square kilometers, Alluri Sitharama Raju district has the highest total green cover at nearly 71.20%.

Guntur district has the lowest green cover (6.60%) consisting of 47.80 square kilometers of notified forest, and 'trees outside' in 114 square kilometers.

Eluru district comes first in having trees outside forests, spread over about 816 square kilometers.

According to the latest official information, the total NFA in the State is 37,420 square kilometers and 'trees outside' account for 10,220 square kilometers. The last biennial forest survey done by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in 2021 revealed that the forest cover in A.P. increased by 3,722 square kilometers in 2015-17, 900 square kilometers in 2017-19, and by just 647 kilometers in 2019-21 largely due to better conservation and afforestation.

To achieve the targeted green cover, the government has ordered that 50 lakh seedlings be planted in each one of the 26 districts, especially along roads, canal banks, railway lines, tank foreshores, lands belonging to educational institutions, offices, industries, panchayat lands and hillocks.

Due priority has been attached to compensatory afforestation, where forest lands are diverted for non-forest uses.

Robo cameras to be mounted for traffic monitoring in Hyderabad

Lavpreet Kaur
HYDERABAD

Sitting in the control room, the Cyberabad traffic police officials keep a close watch over roads, junctions and highways across the commissionerate.

Helping them do so are the newly installed pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) or robotic cameras providing 360-degree view up to 1.5 km-2 km.

The commissionerate currently has 17 such cameras installed on the high-rise office buildings in the IT corridor of Hyderabad.

As many as 97 more buildings have been identified, mostly software parks, on which these cameras will be installed in the coming months, Cyberabad Joint Commissioner (Traffic) Joel D. Davis explained as he swivelled the controls from left to right, titled up and down and zoomed in and out of the gridlocked junctions there.

With these cameras in place, the traffic police force has been able to accelerate decongestion efforts and communicate real-time traffic updates to commuters via social media channels and also through Google Maps.

Along with this, problem areas are also being identified through field study and drone visuals.

The IKEA rotary curbs were introduced earlier this year, while road expansion work is underway on the road linking JNTU and Yashoda Hospitals.

Central team visits Tirupati to assess feasibility of multimodal bus station

A.D. Rangarajan
TIRUPATI

After a brief hiatus, the multimodal bus station project for Tirupati was back in the limelight again, with a Central team visiting the temple city to check for its feasibility and functional executability.

The arrival of the Central team led by Prakash Gaur, Chief Executive Officer, National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML), and Project Director Pooja Mishra on Sunday followed the meeting Tirupati MP M. Gurumoorthy had with Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi last week.

Tirupati witnesses a huge floating population, with footfall reaching up to one lakh on some days, mostly in the form of Tirumala-bound devotees and students studying in the scores of universities and national educational institutes such as the IIT-Tirupati and IISER.

Tirupati MP M. Gurumoorthy (centre) with members of a Central team at the APSRTC bus complex in Tirupati. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The project is meant to come up with a comprehensive facility that brings multiple modes of transport to the reach of the commuters. The proposed infrastructure will also be planned and executed in tune with the growing needs of the city in the future, with an aesthetic and traditional touch that resonates with the spiritual backdrop of Tirupati.

Dr. Gurumoorthy, who went around the bus station complex along with the team members, spoke to the media on the project. He said that the multimodal bus station project had taken shape much earlier, but was held back due to design changes suggested in the existing bus station building.

The proposed facility would have a bus terminal, commercial complexes, footbridge, a "sky walk" linking the bus and railway stations, dormitories, charging stations for electric buses,and so on, he said.

He sought the State government's quick nod to the administrative sanctions for the project.

'Faulty' hiring: Khan seeks Calicut varsity V-C's explanation

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Kerala Governor and Chancellor Arif Mohammed Khan has sought an explanation from P. Raveendran, Vice-Chancellor, University of Calicut, over a complaint seeking recovery of money from officials for the reported losses incurred to the institution due to "faulty recruitment" of faculty members between 2019 and 2022.

The complaint was filed by Joshin Joseph, one of the applicants, and a differently-abled person. The university had appointed 56 assistant professors, 16 associate professors, and 13 professors as per the job notification issued in 2019. However, it was later alleged that reservation norms were flouted. After another applicant legally challenged the recruitment process, both the Kerala High Court and the Supreme Court found merit in the allegation. It was pointed out that reservation for the differently-abled persons was not implemented properly and that 24 assistant professors, four associate professors, and five professors were appointed in violation of norms.

His complaint highlighted a High Court order which sought to recover money from the authorities if they are found to have incurred financial losses to the institution.

Middle path

The modified pension scheme overcomes some shortcomings of NPS

The Centre has restored guaranteed pensions for its employees, meeting their demand halfway, and weakly trying to hold on to principles of fiscal prudence. Pension schemes around the world, whether contributory and market linked or underwritten by the exchequer, are facing a crisis, due to multiple factors, including demographic reasons. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the total Budget estimates of various States and Union Territories for pension in 2023-24 was ₹5,22,105.4 crore, which is between 6%-21% of their total revenue receipts. Pensioners argue that it is their deferred wages. It can also be argued that pensions from the exchequer are at the cost of future generations. Governments are outsourcing jobs through contracts, and resorting to innovations such as Agnipath – a short service scheme for the military services – and the ballooning of pension bills is among the reasons that drive such measures. Governments are also leaving posts unfilled. All such measures are leading to two things. First, it negatively affects state capacity, and second, it reduces avenues for government and public sector jobs for India's expanding number of young job seekers. The New Pension Scheme (NPS), which was market-linked and managed by an autonomous entity, was introduced during the stock market boom. Two decades later, when people began retiring under the NPS – those who joined after January 1, 2004 – it turned out that they were receiving much less than what they would have got under the old scheme.

With the Congress making the restoration of the old scheme a central piece of its politics, the BJP was pushed to the corner. A committee led by former Finance Secretary and Cabinet Secretary-designate T.V. Somanathan devised a middle path that involves employee contributions and enhanced share from the Centre. The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), approved by the Cabinet, promises a pension of 50% of the average basic pay of the last 12 months before retirement and a minimum pension of ₹10,000 for those who worked for at least 10 years. The Centre's share towards the scheme was increased from 14% under the NPS to 18.5%, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said will ensure government employees dignity and financial security. The BJP and the government should note that no reform can be sustainable without broad political consensus. Social security for older people must cover the widest segment of the population. Government employees are an organised pressure group, and having managed to restore their guaranteed pension, they should wholeheartedly welcome the UPS, rather than protest against employee contribution.

Catalyst for change

The Hema Committee report should help reform the film industry

At different points of time, come events that have the potential to shape the future. Whether these catalysts fulfil that potential to the fullest extent or not is in the hands of the people in their vortex. The Justice K. Hema Committee report that studied the issues faced by women in cinema, could well be one such catalyst. The three-member committee was constituted in 2017, based on a petition submitted by the Kerala-based Women in Cinema Collective, and submitted its report two years later. It was released last week, several paragraphs redacted, and contains unsurprising and yet disturbing revelations about the state of affairs in the film industry – discrimination, exploitation and sexual harassment of women. The term 'casting couch', hatched in Hollywood, has become repugnantly accepted as a euphemism for sexual favours in exchange for a role in films. Justice Hema points out that making the exchange of sexual favours the passkey for entry into the field itself, and normalising it and conflating it with consensual sexual activity, makes the industry inherently exploitative. The report deals also with other inequities that disadvantage women in the industry, including the lack of essential facilities such as toilets, changing rooms, safe transportation, and accommodation at the shooting spot which are violative of the right to privacy; and discrimination in remuneration, and a lack of binding contractual agreements. These affect the range of women across the industry – actors, technicians, make-up artists, dancers, support staff, and particularly so, women lower in the pecking order.

The way ahead is not as murky as the hole that the film industry, here Malayalam, seems to find itself in. The government has decided to constitute a special investigation team to go into the accusations of harassment. While the government would do well to ignore the committee's recommendation on doing away with internal complaints committees for each film project, it must act on suggestions that call for provision of essential facilities and for structural reforms within the film industry, including professionalising it. Nothing will change unless the state gets involved meaningfully in creating an equitable work space for men and women, in an industry dominated by people with great power and money, who have so far refuted the existence of such a power cartel or have remained silent. Each of the issues raised must be taken cognisance of, and acted upon. As with the #MeToo movement, Justice Hema's report has the potential of being a catalyst to enable scores of women to speak up. It behoves the state to ensure that their complaints are not ignored, or worse still, used against them.

Reality of reel life, exploitation as a structural problem

Kaleeswaram Raj
a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India

Thulasi K. Raj
a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India

The Justice K. Hema Committee report, which was released by the Kerala government on August 19, 2024, has ignited a debate on the issues faced by women in Malayalam film industry. The committee, which was formed in 2017, had submitted its report to the government in 2019. A redacted version of the report has now been put up in the public domain. Though it addresses the issues faced by women in the vernacular films, the issues transcend these boundaries.

Broadly, the report deals with two categories of issues. The first is the sexual exploitation of and assault against women in cinema. The report says that women are often required to exchange sexual favours for opportunities and those women who refuse to 'co-operate' are sidelined from the industry at the instance of powerful men. The second is discriminatory practices against women and a lack of even basic facilities. The report has facilitated a long overdue discussion on the lack of gender equality for women at the workplace. The brutal incident of the rape and murder of a doctor at a hospital in Kolkata also reinforces the need for this conversation.

Culture of assault

The concerns raised in the Hema Committee report are disturbing, yet are not surprising. They are an extension of the problems women face in a conservative, patriarchal society such as ours. Women are burdened by stereotypes and expectations about how they should behave. This is why it is problematic to consider instances of sexual assault on women as isolated. Viewed this way, rape must not be considered only as a crime committed by a bad man but as a culmination too of the social practices which deem the consent of women to be practically irrelevant. A rigid individualistic approach to sexual assault often distracts attention from this reality. Ranging from what to wear and what friends to have, individual choice is too often stolen from women. Rape is the crudest manifestation of this approach – not considering women as persons of autonomy and dignity. The normalisation of objectification and gender stereotypes has a central role in perpetuating sexual assault against women. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, 31,516 cases of rape are reported in 2022 in India – a reported rape in every 16 minutes. Workplace harassment is another reflection of this culture of assault.

In the context of workplace assault, in *Vishaka and Ors vs State Of Rajasthan and Ors* (1997), a writ petition was filed to enforce the rights of working women against sexual harassment. A series of guidelines was prescribed by the Supreme Court of India – a unique kind of judicial legislation – to prevent workplace harassment. These included duties on the employer to prevent assault as well as the constitution of a complaint redress mechanism for aggrieved persons.

It took more than 16 years thereafter for the legislature to enact The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. A notable feature of the legislation is that it provides for the constitution of an internal complaints committee (ICC) which can be approached by the aggrieved woman. The definition of 'workplace' in section 2(o) of the Act is broad enough to take in the film industry as well.

The Justice Hema Committee report has however indicated that the ICC is not suitable for women in the film industry. It is argued that there is a likelihood of the abuser or the employer influencing ICC members. The committee, therefore, pleads for an independent forum constituted by the government to deal with the problems faced by women in cinema.

However, this is a problem that any ICC faces and is not unique to the industry. While additional safeguards of accountability might help alleviate the problem, the suggestion to completely overlook the complaints redress mechanism formulated by a parliamentary legislation seems unwise.

Registration of crimes

Many have questioned the lack of a registration of crimes pursuant to the committee report. They ask why an investigation is not initiated and why the accused cannot be brought to justice. The concern is sensible. The report is a modified version which redacted the names of survivors and the culprits. Masking the names of survivors is done in recognition of the principle of survivor anonymity, a well-accepted norm in criminal jurisprudence on sexual assault. Anonymity will remain intact during the investigation and prosecution as well.

In *Nipun Saxena vs Union Of India* (2018), the Supreme Court explained the importance of penalisation of the disclosure of the name and the identity of the survivors of sexual offences as mandated in Section 228A of the Indian Penal Code, which is now reiterated in Sections 72 and 73 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Since the provisions are substantially the same, the ratio of the judgment in *Nipun Saxena* would govern the field. In the judgment, the Court said that the object of the provision is to protect survivors from hostile discrimination and future harassment. This being the law of the land, the Kerala government must take a proactive role in the matter after sensitising itself in the matter.

The right to privacy is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution (*Puttaswamy*, 2017). The statements were given by several victims in the belief that this anonymity will be maintained. The right to decide whether to pursue a criminal case does lie with the victim. It is true that in our criminal justice system, the state initiates prosecution against the accused, arguing and conducting the case on behalf of the victim. However, even if the state investigates the crime, it becomes quite difficult to prove a crime without the cooperation of the victim.

Why survivors are often reluctant to pursue complaints in the case of sexual assault is important for us to recognise. A society which looks at survivors of sexual assault, with misguided empathy and disgust, instead of support and trust, probably has no moral standing to demand that the survivor must necessarily launch the complaint. We all share collective responsibility for manufacturing this status quo. Moreover, trials in sexual assault cases take years to complete, which are attributable to the high degree of judicial pendency in our country. Bear in mind that the Hema Committee was formed after the sexual assault allegation against a leading Malayalam cinema actor, the trial of which is not yet completed. Survivors also fear potential retaliation from the abuser and others, in terms of refusal to give them work, and being branded as 'problem-makers.'

Structural reforms

The accusations in 2017 against Harvey Weinstein, the American film producer, had eventually led to the #MeToo movement which received global attention. The findings in the Hema Committee report must pave the way for structural reforms, for which the government must take an effective lead. The difficulties faced by women in the industry, particularly those in the lower strata as opposed to the lead actresses deserve acknowledgment. From the lack of adequate sanitation facilities to hostile bias, every issue needs comprehensive study and resolution. More importantly, the report will accelerate the Indian woman's struggle against workplace discrimination by equipping her with an emboldened awareness.

The findings in the K. Hema Committee report must pave the way for reforms in the film industry; the government needs to take an effective role in this

New-age gateway devices, the latest health threat

Bhavna Barmi
a clinical psychologist and Founder, Happiness Studio

What happens when a portrayed healthy alternative turns out to be more dangerous than the original? This is precisely what is happening with new-age gateway devices such as e-cigarettes, vaping pens, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, or ENDS, heat-not-burn (HNB) devices and other heated tobacco products (HTPs). All these devices were portrayed to offer a healthier alternative to smoking that would make it easier to quit tobacco. But the reality is quite different. Instead, they have caused a public health crisis, causing physical harm and affecting the mental well-being of children.

A new pandemic

Instead of helping people quit tobacco, the manufacturers of these new-age gateway devices have discovered a lucrative market – children. This has led to a surge in youth vaping, creating a new pandemic. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2023, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among middle and high school students in United States, with 2.1 million (7.7%) students using e-cigarettes, including 5,50,000 (4.6%) middle school students. These devices are now getting a new generation hooked on nicotine and exposing them to potential long-term health consequences.

Children have been lured into trying and becoming addicted to e-cigarettes and vaping devices through a targeted marketing of flavours such as strawberry, cotton candy, pop rocks, and lemonade. In addition to alleged predatory marketing tactics, mental health issues and the negative effects of excessive technology use are also driving some children towards these devices.

The psychological factors affecting children operate on two levels.

First, children are increasingly susceptible to new-age devices from an early age. What was once an adolescent concern, for engaging in distracting activities and developing addictive tendencies, has shifted, with even those under 10 years of age now showing signs of vulnerability. The age group most at risk remains between 10 and 20 years old, a demographic that manufacturers allegedly exploit through appealing advertising and enticing vaping flavours.

The colourful imagery created by these new-age gateway devices suggests that these products will bring happiness and elevate one's social status in the lives of targeted children. In their eagerness to fit in, children often prioritise peer preferences over their own, leading them to embrace vaping and other harmful behaviours. Those who vape are more likely to experience feelings of loneliness and social isolation when compared to their peers who abstain from these.

These psychological factors contribute to a troubling surge in children being drawn to enticing electronic devices such as vapes and e-cigarettes.

A gateway to danger

The second aspect is the impact that such habits will have on the physical and mental well-being of children. While physical impacts such as lung damage and the spread of e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury (EVALI) have become evident, we also need to shine the spotlight on the mental impact on children due to these new-age gateway devices.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies, an Australian Government statutory agency, has said that evidence indicates that vaping has negative effects on people who use e-cigarettes. With increasing rates of e-cigarette usage in Australia and worldwide, such new-age gateway devices are associated with mental health challenges such as depressive symptoms, anxiety, perceived stress, and suicide-related behaviours among adolescents. Key risk factors include friends' positive attitudes towards vaping and parental smoking. E-cigarettes are highly addictive, particularly for individuals up to around the age of 25. This is a developmental stage which makes them especially vulnerable to structural and chemical changes induced by nicotine addiction. Once addiction takes root, it can increase the likelihood of developing other substance use disorders later in life, creating a cycle.

What is inside these new-age gateway devices that is causing more addiction?

Survey's findings

In November 2022, *JAMA Network Open*, a medical journal published by the American Medical Association, revealed after a survey of 1,50,000-plus respondents, that more adolescent e-cigarette users reported using their first tobacco product within five minutes of waking when compared to users of cigarettes and other tobacco products combined. This finding highlights the strong grip that nicotine addiction has on the adolescent brain.

The study further said that e-cigarettes are highly engineered drug delivery devices designed to create and sustain addiction. Later versions of e-cigarettes, especially after 2015, started a more efficient delivery of nicotine. The addition of benzoic acid to the nicotine e-liquid produces protonated nicotine, which enhances the addictive potential by making it easier for users to inhale significant quantities of nicotine – levels that are difficult to achieve with traditional cigarettes or earlier e-cigarette models. This results in heightened addiction and an increased mental dependency on these devices.

These new-age gateway devices are also being used to experiment with harder substances such as cannabis, and even cocaine and heroin. Many children, teenagers, and even parents mistakenly believe that vaping only involves harmless water vapour and pleasant flavours. The reality is far more sinister and can lead to a lifetime of substance abuse issues.

Portrayed as offering a healthier alternative to smoking and quitting tobacco, these devices are now causing a public health crisis among young people

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Assured pensions

The outcome of the general election and the possible big challenge from the Opposition in the Assembly elections ahead appear to have forced the government at the Centre to take the decision to grant assured pension — now known as the 'Unified Pension Scheme' (Page 1, "Assured pensions return as govt. backtracks on NPS", August 25). It is perhaps the fear of losing power that has made this government backtrack even on other issues including the scheme of lateral entry into the bureaucracy. This proves beyond doubt that it was arrogance that drove the government in its earlier terms. Anyhow though, 'better late than never'.

S.K. Khosla,
Chandigarh

Government employees are overpaid and have nil or least accountability and productivity. Their demands are for more financial benefits. It is a fact that heavy amounts are spent towards pensions for government employees and MLAs/MPs. The government needs to evolve a uniform pension policy without scope for politics.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao,
Hyderabad

Ukraine and Russia

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reportedly has put the onus on India to try and ensure that it is Russia that ends the war (Inside pages, August 24). It is not clear as to how India will react to this.

T.M. Uday Shankar,
Hyderabad

Governor's sanction

The moot question is whether, contrary to the advice given by the Council of Ministers, the Governor could have accorded sanction for the prosecution of the Karnataka Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, for alleged corruption. Sanction should be based on investigation and strong material. Otherwise, it would be a farce. The President and the Governors are bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. However, under Article 163(1), the Governor can exercise his discretion whenever it is required. But he has to give valid reasons as to why he is disagreeing with the Council of Ministers.

Over the last decade, the Governor's role has become Governor's rule as the ruling BJP has routinely used Governors to destabilise Opposition-ruled States. This has been destructive of the federal structure and the rule of law, and all principles of constitutional accountability.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

Corrections & Clarifications

The snippet, "Nicholas Pooran powers West Indies to victory" ('Sport' page, August 25, 2024) did not include West Indies score. They finished with 176/3 in 17.5 overs.

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Investing in persons with disabilities

A recent Hindi movie, *Srikanth*, starring Rajkummar Rao, narrates the story of the industrialist Srikanth Bolla and his journey of overcoming the challenge of visual impairment. In the film, the people of Srikanth's father's village ask the family not to invest in the son's education or life in general. Many parents of children with some form of disability are similarly made to believe that their offspring are not worthy of investment. Persons with disabilities (PwDs) face social stigma, marginalisation in all sectors, and discrimination in education and employment; most importantly, they struggle for dignity. Educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure and support mechanisms and workplaces lack robust diversity policies that would give proper representation to PwDs.

Rajesh Ranjan

lawyer-researcher who writes on public law, rights, and public engagement of Constitution

Status of education and jobs

The 2023 report by Nifty 50 constituent companies reveals that only five out of the 50 companies have more than 1% of PwDs on their rolls, with four of them being public sector companies. Similarly, data from the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People reveals that less than 1% of India's educational institutions are disabled-friendly, less than 40% of school buildings have ramps, and approximately 17% have accessible restrooms. A report of the Sarthak Educational Trust titled 'Accessibility and Inclusion in Higher Education in India' states that reservation is provided under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in government jobs, and incentives in non-government jobs, but there is a clear lack of implementation. The lack of infrastructure combined with the lack of inclusive policies hinders the full participation of PwDs in society. Thus, it is imperative that both public and private institutions invest in the uplift of PwDs.

The Indian education system needs an inclusive framework to promote PwDs. For instance, Harvard University in the U.S. has Local Disability Coordinators who are specialised in helping PwDs find accommodation in the city. Similarly, Stanford University in the U.S. has a robust institutional structure which includes providing support in housing and devices to PwDs. It also has a comprehensive resource centre that supports students with disabilities. Few Indian universities provide such impressive models. In 2023, Shiv Nadar University enumerated a disability support policy, which includes providing personalised support to students on a case-by-case basis, depending on the student's health condition every semester. Based on the nature and severity of the disability, the Dean of Academics decides measures for academic accommodation and the Dean of Students for other aspects.

However, these measures are not institutionalised. Hence, they are not uniform, leaving a vast number of students from diverse backgrounds outside the walls of the university. Despite the University Grants Commission's draft accessibility and inclusivity guidelines for higher education institutions to ensure that admission announcements and advertisements are circulated in accessible formats, the presence of PwDs is not very encouraging.

In terms of employment, despite the legislative mandate of providing reservation for PwDs, and of drafting an equal opportunity policy detailing the measures proposed by the establishment to ensure an inclusive work environment and prohibit discrimination at the workplace, employers have failed to do these. For the effective implementation of these rules, States should come forward and develop a compliance mechanism. For instance, a model from Brazil can be emulated, where companies with more than 100 employees must have PwDs comprise 2%-5% of the total workforce. In cases of non-compliance, the company may be subject to fines based on criteria such as its size and the number of times offences were repeated. Some countries have also developed incentive mechanisms. Japan, for instance, has developed a system of subsidiaries for employees who have some form of disability.

Educational institutions lack the necessary infrastructure and workplaces lack robust diversity policies to give proper representation to persons with disabilities

Striving for dignity

The British artist, David Hevey, once remarked that "the history of the portrayal of disabled people is the history of oppressive and negative representation. This has meant that disabled people have been presented as socially flawed able-bodied people, not as disabled people with their own identities". The identity of PwDs is eroded in several ways. PwDs are considered by many as pitiful or helpless. Many believe that PwDs can only be in relationships with one another. Disability in addition to belonging to a "lower" caste or a particular gender creates a double/triple burden on people.

Sociologist Colin Barnes has argued that PwDs are "portrayed as objects of pity, violence, curiosity and ridicule, as burdens on society, sexually abnormal, and overall, as people incapable of community participation". This portrayal forms the basis of the societal attitude towards PwDs. Recently, three former cricketers mocked PwDs in a video that went viral after India won the World Championship of Legends. Everyday struggles and the stigmatisation and mockery of PwDs reveals the inability of so-called "able-bodied people" to treat them equally with dignity.

Abhishek Anicca in his book, *The Grammar of My Body*, writes, "My friends say disabled people can be negative. I agree. We are so negative that sometimes the able-bodied mind never reaches us. That distance is too far... It is thus those who are creating the distance [who] should bridge the gap."

The polity of J&K is at an inflection point

After decades, regional leaders are looking inwards rather than at New Delhi

STATE OF PLAY

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The Election Commission of India (ECI)'s announcement that Assembly elections will soon be held in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has already recast mainstream politics in the Union Territory. Assembly elections were last held in the erstwhile State of J&K in 2014. Today, a region marred by three decades of conflict and separatist Hurriyat's boycott politics is charting a new path with electoral politics and drawing new battle lines between regional and national political forces.

The manifestos of J&K's two regional parties, the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), reflect this change. Since the armed uprising in J&K in the 1990s, mainstream parties would focus on *sadak, bijli, pani* (road, electricity, water) during elections, leaving core ideological politics of aspirations and sentiment to the separatists. However, the Centre's move on August 5, 2019, to end J&K's semi-autonomous status and divide the State into two UTs (J&K and Ladakh) posed an existential crisis to the mainstream parties, forcing them to seek restoration of the rights that existed earlier. As a result, after many decades, the top leaders in J&K are looking inwards rather than at New Delhi.

In the NC's manifesto titled 'Dignity, Identity and Development', NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah spelled out the party's new political direction, saying the path ahead is fraught with challenges. "Our identity has not only been questioned but systematically

eroded," he said. The NC has pledged to strive for the implementation of the Autonomy Resolution passed by the J&K Assembly in 2000, which seeks more powers in the region than what was enshrined in Article 370 until 2019. It hinted at the pre-1953 position when New Delhi exercised powers in the matters of defence, communication, and foreign affairs alone, while J&K retained the nomenclature of Sadr-e-Riyasat for the head of state. The NC plans to begin the new Assembly, if it has the numbers, with a resolution against the Centre's decisions of August 5, 2019.

Mehbooba Mufti's PDP has sought a final resolution on the Kashmir problem, resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan, and more economic linkages in the region, while referring to the undivided erstwhile State of J&K as it existed prior to 1947.

Both the NC and the PDP have pledged to reverse the laws introduced to J&K in the past five years on land, jobs, mining rights, and natural resources. They have also promised to roll back laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978; the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967; and the Enemy Agents Ordinance, 2005, which have been widely used by the Centre in the past five years to curb separatism in J&K. The PSA, which deals with preventive detention, is one of the few laws retained from the separate Constitution of the erstwhile State of J&K. In fact, Omar Abdullah from the NC and Ms. Mufti from the PDP, both former Chief Ministers, were detained by the Lieutenant Governor's administration under the PSA in 2019 for several months.

Through their hardened positions, the two parties pose a new challenge to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Central government in navigating the volatile situation in J&K. The Centre had aimed to dislodge and discredit mainstream regional parties in J&K after 2019. It propped up new regional parties that treat Article 370 as part of the past and not as an issue of the future. However, in the District Development Council polls in 2020, the regional alliance, the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, won 110 out of 180 segments, showing how the regional parties still hold sway. During the Lok Sabha elections this year, the NC and Congress won two out of five seats in J&K. The Awami Ittehad Party, whose chief Sheikh Rashid, widely known as Engineer Rashid, has been calling for a referendum against "oppression" and involvement of the United Jehad Council in the talks, managed to win the Baramulla seat.

The new electoral calculus has the Centre rethinking its policy of political engineering. Its iron-hand approach towards separatists may have brought peace, which no thinking policymaker in New Delhi considers permanent. While restoring electoral politics will lessen the sense of alienation in J&K, New Delhi will have to engage with these political demands sooner rather than later. The BJP is a significant player in J&K, with a dedicated vote bank in the Hindu belt of the Jammu region. It has to reinvent itself like the NC and the PDP in J&K.

Indians who migrate abroad double their incomes

As their incomes increase by more than 100% when they move abroad, most Indians do not return home even if they are paid more than they were earlier

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

Indians who migrate abroad often experience more than a 100% increase in their income levels whereas Indians who continue to work in their homeland often have to wait for over 20 years to get such a hike. This explains why most Indians who go abroad do not return home even if they benefit from a wage premium on doing so. These conclusions are based on a recent World Bank report titled 'Migrants, Refugees and Societies'.

Indians who migrate abroad experience an average 118% increase in their income levels **(Chart 1).** International migrants from Bangladesh and Ghana experience a 210% and 153% increase in income, respectively. The report states that one key driver for economic migration is the wage gap between the origin and destination country. A truck driver in Canada earns five times more than a truck driver in Mexico, even after adjusting for the difference in cost of living. Nurses in Germany earn nearly seven times more than nurses in the Philippines.

While the absolute gains in incomes after migration are higher for high-skilled workers, low-skilled workers also experience a multi-fold increase in income. **Chart 2** shows the income gains for low-skilled workers who migrate to the U.S. The incomes of low-skilled Indians who migrate to the U.S. increase by 493%. The incomes of low-skilled migrants from Nigeria and Yemen increase by about 1,500%, the highest rise.

Chart 3 shows the income gains of low-skilled workers in other migration corridors. The incomes of low-skilled Indians who migrate to the Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) surge by 118%. Indians who migrate to the UAE specifically experience a 298% increase. This calculation doesn't adjust incomes for purchasing power parity because most of the spending occurred in the origin country through remittances. About 85% of the Indian migrants' earnings in UAE are spent in India.

The potential gains in income are highest when people move from low to high-income countries. A non-migrant from India would need 24 years of economic growth to match the gains made by an Indian who migrated to a high-income country, while a non-migrant from Bangladesh or Ghana would need 43 years and one from the Philippines would need 78 years. **Chart 4** shows the number of years it would take for non-migrants in origin countries to match the economic gains made by migrants who moved to high-income countries.

The report states that about 40% of all migrants eventually return to their country of origin. However, the number varies based on destination. All migrants leave Gulf Cooperation Council countries. About 20% to 50% of migrants leave OECD countries within five to 10 years of arrival or move to a third country. Less than 20% of migrants leave the U.S. Those who do are mostly from high-income regions such as Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – in these cases, the return rates are over 40%. The return rate of Asian migrants in the U.S. is about 20%. **Chart 5** shows the share of migrants who leave the U.S., by gender and region of origin.

Temporary migrants who return voluntarily after staying abroad turn out to be better off than before they left. Migrants benefit from a wage premium on coming back, especially if they are high-skilled workers. However, those who are forced to return face poorer socio-economic outcomes. On average, less than 2% of migrants are forced to return from the U.S., Canada, European Union, Japan, and Korea every year.

The road to riches

The charts are sourced from a World Bank report titled 'Migrants, Refugees, and Societies'

Chart 1: The chart shows the average increase in income (%) due to international migration

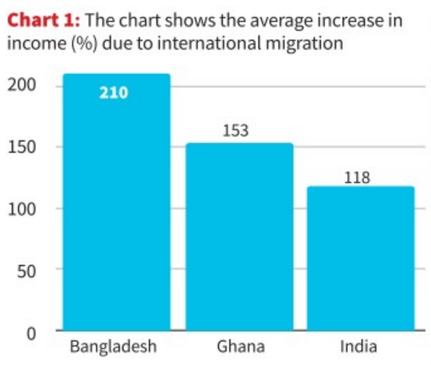


Chart 2: The chart shows the increase in income (%) for low-skilled workers after migrating to the United States

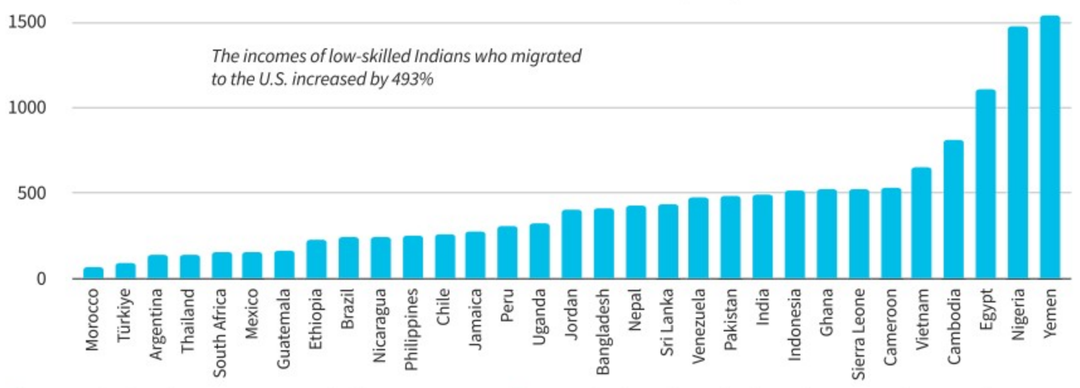


Chart 3: The chart shows income gains for low-skilled workers in various migration corridors (in %)

Chart 4: Years of growth non-migrants need to match the gains of migrants who moved to high-income countries

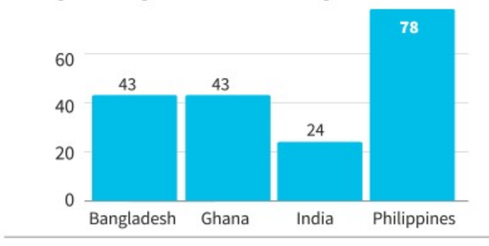
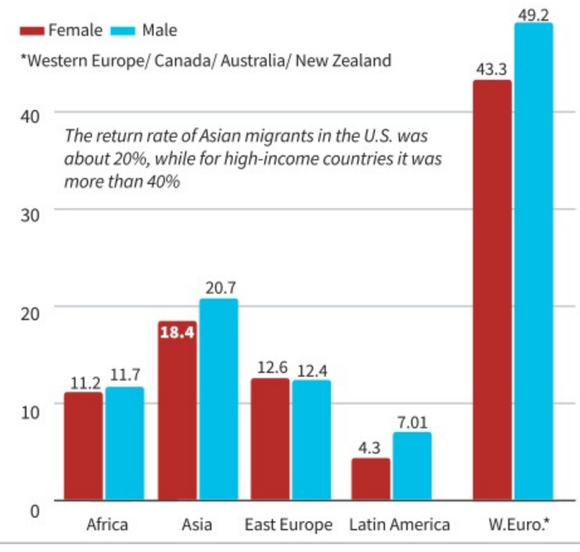


Chart 5: The chart shows the share of migrants who return from the United States, by gender and region of origin



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 26, 1974

When U.S. Generals were watched

Washington, Aug. 25: The United States Defence Secretary, Mr. James Schlesinger, and members of his staff kept a close watch on their Generals during the final days of the Nixon Administration to avoid the possibility of a military show of force in support of Mr. Nixon, an informed source reported here yesterday. Mr. Schlesinger feared that an order could possibly to given to a military unit outside normal channels to stage such a display between a vote on impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives and a trial of the President in the U.S. Senate, the source said. The Defence Secretary told a journalist speaking of that period: "In keeping with my statutory responsibilities, I did assure myself that there would be no question about the proper constitutional and legislated chain of command and there never was any question." The Defence Department never had the slightest indication during that time that the White House had even considered using military units to block the impeachment process against Mr. Nixon, the source said. But Pentagon officials kept an especially close surveillance on the Air Force and its leaders for any signs of activity in support of the President, he continued. The U.S. Air Force is believed to have remained especially faithful to the former President because of his insistence on continuing the war in Vietnam until it was certain that American prisoners, the majority of whom were Air Force pilots, were to be tried and honourably repatriated. The source said that the Defence Department carefully watched the atmosphere in mess halls and officers' clubs and found there a predominant feeling of respect for the constitutional procedure being carried out against the President.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 26, 1924

Alliance bank

Calcutta, Aug. 25: At the High Court today Mr. Justice C.C. Ghese delivered judgment dismissing the application made by two Indian creditors of the Alliance Bank of Simla, Ltd., in voluntary liquidation, praying that the Bank be compulsorily wound up. They also prayed that another gentleman, preferably a qualified accountant, be appointed joint official liquidator with the existing liquidators.

From Page One

Attacking Hezbollah, Israel jets bomb Lebanon

It said the operation targeted "a qualitative Israeli military target that will be announced later" as well as "enemy sites and barracks and Iron Dome (missile defence) platforms".

Hezbollah said the strikes would allow it to launch more attacks deeper into Israel, but a later statement said "military operations for today have been completed". It dismissed Israel's claim to have thwarted a stronger attack, without providing evidence for its own claims.

U.S. President Joe Biden was "closely monitoring events in Israel and Lebanon," according to Sean Savett, a spokesperson for the National Security Council.

Egypt is hosting high-level talks in Cairo on Sunday aimed at bridging the gaps in an evolving proposal for a truce and the release of scores of hostages held by Hamas.

India to take up issues of migrants with Brazil

"With Brazil holding the G-20 Presidency this year, the Ministers will also discuss how the two countries as [part of the] Troika can take forth key G-20 outcomes from the Indian Presidency last year," the Ministry said, adding that the two sides would discuss ways to further strengthen the India-Brazil strategic partnership signed in 2006.

Mr. Vieira is meeting with business leaders on ways to grow bilateral trade, which has ranged between $10 and $15 billion in the past few years.

The Joint Commission will meet on Tuesday, with cooperation in defence, agriculture and energy on the agenda. Brazil exports crude oil and cooperates with India on biofuels.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Border Control Services recorded that the number of Indians crossing over from the U.S.'s southern borders had grown to around 1,00,000, five times more than 2019-20 figures, as Indians have now become the third-largest community of illegal immigrants in the U.S.

SIT to probe abuse in Malayalam filmdom

Asked about his response to the allegations, he said he would respond in detail after getting legal advice.

The young actor had spoken to presspersons on Saturday evening, accusing Mr. Siddique of sexually assaulting her after calling her to Thiruvananthapuram for the audition of a "non-existent movie".

"Siddique got in touch with me through a social media platform and offered me a role in a Tamil movie in which his son would also be acting. Later, I came to Thiruvananthapuram to take forward the offer. It was a trap. Such a movie did not exist. He sexually assaulted me for an hour in a hotel room. He hit and kicked me when I resisted," she said.

Mr. Siddique's resignation comes two days after he spoke to presspersons to give AMMA's first official response to the Hema committee report. He had specifically said that the organisation had not received any complaints about a "casting couch".

Hardly an hour after Mr. Siddique's resignation came Mr. Ranjith's announcement. He confirmed to *The Hindu* that he has submitted his resignation to Kerala Minister for Cultural Affairs Saji Cherian. In a voice clip he sent out to the media, he said that he does not want the situation that he was facing as an individual to be used to tarnish the image of the State government which appointed him.

Ms. Mitra had accused Mr. Ranjith of behaving misappropriately with her during the pre-production period of the 2009 Malayalam film *Paleri Manikyam: Oru Pathirakolapathakathinte Katha*. Mr. Ranjith had denied the allegations although he agreed that she had met him as part of an audition.

Several women have also accused former AMMA general secretary Edavela Babu, and actors Mukesh, Sudheesh, and Riyas Khan of sexually harassing or misbehaving with them. The public disclosures reportedly forced the State government to change its earlier stand that it required a complaint or legally relevant materials to act on the allegations and the K. Hema Committee report.

CBI finishes polygraph test in Kolkata case

The resident doctors said that the administration is trying to break their unity, adding that attempts are being made to give a political colour to their protests.

More Durga Puja clubs across the city announced that they would not accept the traditional honorarium to community Durga Puja in protest against the rape and murder.

As the Paschimbanga Chattro Samaj has given a call for a march to Nabanna, the State Secretariat, on July 27, the Kolkata police and West Bengal police took to social media to point out that several candidates are scheduled to take the UGC-NET examination on the same date.

While the BJP has offered its support for a proposed march to Nabanna, the Left and other political parties have not announced their stand.

Laws to curb crimes against women made stricter: Modi

PM says the Centre is with the State governments in every way to stop atrocities against women; he says measures have been put in place to ensure swift action and prevent tampering with e-FIR

Abhinay Deshpande
BULDHANA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said his government was reinforcing laws to impose stricter punishments for crimes against women.

"I assure you, the Union government is with the State governments in every way to stop atrocities against women. We cannot stop until this sinful mentality has been eradicated from Indian society," Mr. Modi said.

His statement comes amid widespread protests in West Bengal following the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a hospital in Kolkata.

Speaking at a rally of *Lakhpati Didis* – women members of self-help groups earning ₹1 lakh annually – at Jalgaon in north Maharashtra, Mr. Modi said his administration had done more for women in the past decade than all the previous governments combined since Independence.

Show of support: Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an interaction with *Lakhpati Didis* in Jalgaon on Sunday. PTI

Pointing out that first information reports (FIR) were not registered on time earlier and cases became very time-consuming, Mr. Modi said such obstacles had been removed in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), where an entire chapter had been dedicated to atrocities against women and children.

Mr. Modi said victims could register e-FIR if they did not wish to go to the police station and measures were in place to ensure swift action and prevent tampering with the e-FIR at the police station level.

"It would help in speedy investigation and strict punishment for the culprits. The new laws have provisions for death penalty and life imprisonment for sexual crimes against minors. BNS clearly defines false promises of marriage and deception to act against cheating in the name of marriage," Mr. Modi said, reminding all State governments and political parties that atrocities against women were an unpardonable sin and the guilty and accomplices should not be spared.

Governments may change, but our biggest responsibility as a society and as a government should be to protect the life and dignity of women, he said.

He said that before 2014, women self-help groups received less than ₹25,000 crore in loans, whereas in the past 10 years, it had surged to ₹9 lakh crore.

He also interacted with *Lakhpati Didis* and launched a ₹2,500-crore revolving fund that will benefit 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh self-help groups.

The Prime Minister also stressed the importance of the BJP-led *Mahayuti* government in Maharashtra for the State's continued stability and prosperity, noting that Maharashtra was a key player in India's development, with its future hinging on further investments and job creation. "Maharashtra is the shining star of a developed India. The future of the State lies in more investment and job growth," he said.

Judiciary advocating secular civil code for decades, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Reiterating his call for a "secular civil code", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said though his government had become vocal on the issue for the first time, the judiciary in the country had been advocating it for several decades.

He praised the judiciary for fulfilling its "moral responsibility" of being vigilant and active on national issues.

Addressing the concluding ceremony of platinum jubilee celebrations of the Rajasthan High Court in Jodhpur, Mr. Modi referred to his Independence Day remarks and said the judiciary's "clear stand" on secular civil code, which was an issue of "national unity", would strengthen the countrymen's faith in the courts.

Reframing ideas

Mr. Modi had given a push to the controversial subject of the Uniform Civil Code, reframing it as a secular civil code, in his Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15.

He affirmed that the country was following a "communal civil code" which discriminated people on the basis of religion.

The Uniform Civil Code finds a mention as a Directive Principle of State Policy in Article 44 of the Constitution, which is non-justiciable.

While the Supreme Court has over the years described the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as desirable in several of its judgments, it also advised restraint in some verdicts and said a one-stroke implementation could be counterproductive to the unity and integrity of the nation.

'Nation first'

Mr. Modi praised the decisions of the courts in matters such as the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, which he described as an example of "constitutional integration", and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, which he said was a "humanitarian law".

"From the High Courts to the Supreme Court, the judiciary has strengthened the resolve of 'Nation First' on such issues several times," he said.

Leaders from various parties show support for Palestinian cause

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Leaders of several Indian political parties, including the Opposition Congress, the Janata Dal (United), which is part of the ruling coalition, the Samajwadi Party (SP), and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), have unequivocally condemned the ongoing "Zionist aggression" and the "heinous genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel" amid the ongoing war in Gaza.

In a statement on Sunday, the leaders asked the Indian government to work to "ensure peace and justice" in the region.

Samajwadi Party MPs Javed Ali and Mohibbulah, AAP MP Sanjay Singh, JD (U) leader K.C. Tyagi, and Congress leader Danish Ali were among those who joined Mohammad Makram Balawi, the secretary-general of the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds, a pro-Palestinian body, at a meeting here to convey their support for their cause.

Offering a detailed description of Israel's alleged violation of international laws by targeting civilians,

Mohammad Makram Balawi

Mr. Balawi said that more than half of those killed in Israeli attacks were women and children.

'Affront to humanity'

"This brutal assault is not only an affront to humanity but also a gross violation of international law and the principles of justice and peace," the statement by the Indian political leaders said.

It also cited India's historical support to the Palestinian cause.

"We take pride in the fact that India was the first non-Arab country to recognise the State of Palestine in 1988, and has consistently supported the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, sovereignty and liberation," they said.

Rajnath visits U.S. submarine testing facility as India eyes similar centre

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

In a reflection of the growing cooperation in undersea domain and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) between India and the U.S., also a priority area between the Quad partners, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, during his ongoing tour of the U.S., visited the William B. Morgan Large Cavitation Channel (LCC) in the Naval Surface Warfare Centre at Memphis, Tennessee, as India also plans to set up a similar facility.

"The LCC is one of the world's largest and most technically advanced water tunnel facilities for testing submarines, torpedoes, naval surface ships and propellers. The Raksha Mantri was briefed at the facility, and he witnessed an actual tunnel experiment," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. "The discussions also intend to support the ongoing proposal for establishment of similar facility for indigenous design and development in India."

After maritime domain awareness, undersea domain awareness has emerged as a key focus area for India and among the Quad as China rapidly expands its maritime presence in the Indian Ocean and larger Indo-Pacific.

Rajnath Singh visits the William B. Morgan Large Cavitation Channel at the Naval Surface Warfare Centre in Memphis on Sunday. ANI

In addition, during the ongoing visit, the two sides took steps on an earlier understanding of having more Indian military liaison officers at key U.S. military commands. A memorandum of agreement was signed between India and the U.S. regarding the deployment of liaison officers. India will be accordingly deploying the first liaison officer to the Headquarters Special Operations Command in Florida, U.S., the Ministry said.

The Security of Supply Agreement (SoSA) signed on Friday is one of the two broad-based defence industrial cooperation agreements currently under discussion between the two countries as cooperation between defence industries deepens, and comes following the conclusion of all four foundational agreements.

Supply chain stability

In June 2023, during a visit of U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin to India, he and Mr. Singh agreed to initiate negotiations for a SoSA and a 'Reciprocal Defence Procurement' (RDP) agreement which will promote long-term supply chain stability.

"Through this SoSA, the U.S. and India agree to provide reciprocal priority support for goods and services that promote national defence. The arrangement will enable both countries to acquire the industrial resources they need from one another to resolve unanticipated supply chain disruptions to meet national security needs," a statement from the U.S. Department of Defence (DoD) said.

Both Ministers appreciated the progress made in operationalising the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), a Quad initiative, and lauded the ongoing efforts by India to enhance the Maritime Domain Awareness for the partners in the Indian Ocean Region. They also welcomed the ongoing Indian participation in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and noted that India will deploy its Navy personnel in CMF's Combined Task Force 150 headquarters in 2025.

The IPMDA announced by the Quad comprising of India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S. aims to establish a comprehensive system for monitoring and securing maritime activities in the Indo-Pacific.

10 coaches of Dhanbad-bound train detach in U.P., no one hurt

Press Trust of India
BIJNOR

At least 10 coaches got detached from the Dhanbad-bound Ganga Sutlej Express train near the Chakraj Mal area in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor early on Sunday, officials said.

No passenger was hurt in the incident.

Additional Superintendent of Police Dharam Singh Marchal told presspersons, "Some coaches of a train headed to Dhanbad separated after decoupling from the engine and other coaches due to some technical problem at around 4 a.m."

People gather after at least 10 coaches of the Ganga Sutlej Express train uncoupled near Chakraj Mal area in Bijnor on Sunday. PTI

According to Railway officials, the incident occurred when the coupling between two sleeper coaches separated.

Over 200 candidates on way to give the Uttar Pradesh Police recruitment exam were travelling on the train and the local police and Railway administration made arrangements to send them to exam centres by buses.

'Anil Ambani reviewing SEBI order, to take appropriate steps'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

SEBI, on August 22, imposed a fine on chairman of Reliance ADA Group and banned him from securities markets

Reliance ADA Group chairman Anil Ambani is reviewing an order passed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India on August 22 imposing a fine and banning him from the securities markets for five years in the Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL) case and will take appropriate steps as legally advised, his spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday.

"Mr. Ambani had resigned from the Board of Firectors of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. and Reliance Power Ltd. pursuant to SEBI's interim order dated 11 February 2022 in the matter of RHFL, and is in compliance with the said interim order for the last two and a half years," the spokesperson added.

Not parties to the case

In separate statements, Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. and Reliance Power Ltd. stated that they were not noticees or parties to the proceedings before SEBI in which the order had been passed.

No directions were given in the order against both companies.

As per the statements, Mr. Anil Ambani had resigned from the Board of Directors of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. and Reliance Power Ltd. pursuant to the interim order dated February 11, 2022, passed by SEBI in the same proceedings. Therefore, the SEBI order dated August 22 had no bearing whatsoever on the business and affairs of both companies, they said.

2024 verdict forced Centre's U-turn on pensions: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress chief says the power of the people has prevailed over the arrogance of power of the PM

The "U" in the Unified Pension Scheme stands for the U-turns that have been forced on the Narendra Modi government by the people after the Lok Sabha election results, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Sunday.

However, office-bearers of the party spoke in different voices. Praveen Chakravarty, head of All India Professional Congress, welcomed the policy, while Pawan Khera, chairperson of the media and publicity department, called it an "attack" on Dalits, tribal people and the Other Backward Class.

Mr. Kharge cited the rollback of the changes in the long-term capital gains tax and indexation and of the Broadcast Bill and the lateral-entry hiring process, as well as the government's decision to send the Waqf Bill to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, as other examples of U-turns.

We will keep ensuring accountability and protect 140 crore Indians from this despotic government," he said in a post on X.

His party colleague and Lok Sabha member Manickam Tagore, in a post on X, said, "Dear Indian Voter, You reduced arrogance from 303 MPs to 240. You've shown the true strength of democracy and made the Prime Minister rethink his ways."

"Pension for govt. staff in India is inherently a tax on the majority poor to pay the elite minority. So, OPS [old pension scheme] was reformed to NPS [new pension system] in 2013. But NPS did not assure a minimum amount for retired families. Now, UPS does that. UPS = NPS + Min guarantee. This is prudent & welcome," Mr. Chakravarty said.

Taking a completely opposite stand, Mr. Khera said the new scheme "appears to be an attack on Dalits, Adivasis and Backward Classes".

He said in many States, the maximum age for government jobs for reserved categories is 40, and it is 37 in Central Service. "Under this pension scheme, it is mandatory to provide 25 years of service to receive full pension. In such a situation, how will SC/ST/OBC employees be able to avail this facility," he asked.

Central trade unions are waiting for fine print of Unified Pension Scheme

Sangh-affiliated BMS seeks clarity on exit payout ratio, future Pay Commissions' impact, fate of tax benefits, and hikes for oldest retirees; Left unions say 'market gambling' with funds will continue

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Members of the East Central Railway Karmachari Union staging a protest in Patna for restoration of old pension scheme. FILE PHOTO

Central trade unions offered a mixed response to the Unified Pension Scheme, with most saying they are awaiting the notification for clarity on the new scheme's details, including on the ratio of the lumpsum payment at retirement, future revisions, and tax benefits.

However, even those who welcomed the scheme bemoaned the fact that the UPS, unlike the old pension scheme (OPS), requires the employee to contribute 10% of her salary to the scheme's fund.

Shiv Gopal Mishra, secretary of the Joint Consultative Machinery set up for conciliatory purposes between the government and its employees, welcomed the UPS.

He told presspersons on Sunday that the decision would have retrospective effect, meaning that those who joined after January 1, 2004 and retired under the NPS will now be eligible for UPS benefits.

"The only issue is that UPS is contributory, as is the NPS. Otherwise, 90% of the provisions under the OPS are there under the UPS," he said.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, a trade union affiliated to the Sangh Parivar, also welcomed the decision, with BMS general secretary Ravindra Himte saying that the Centre had attempted to overcome the shortcomings of the NPS through the UPS.

"The feature of commutation of pension was available in OPS, not in NPS/UPS. However, some other important features of UPS are still not clear, such as ratio of lumpsum payment on exit; revision of pension by future Pay Commissions; continuation of tax benefits; increase in pension on completion of 80, 85, 90, 95 and 100 years. For these clarifications, we have to wait till the publication of detailed notification of UPS," he said.

The Central trade unions in the Opposition camp opposed the UPS. The Hind Mazdoor Sabha, of which Mr. Mishra is the vice-president, said the new scheme is meant to hoodwink the employees. "If MPs and MLAs will get pension without any contribution, why is the Centre denying it to its employees," asked HMS general secretary Harbhajan Singh Siddhu.

Similarly, the Left unions CITU and AITUC also questioned the UPS. "The Modi-led NDA government with its neoliberal pursuit of safeguarding the interests of speculative crony capital has come with this UPS with some modification of benefits with additional contribution of 4.5% from the government only to further its investment of pension funds of ₹10,53,850 crore called assets under management of total 99,77,165 employees under NPS as on July 31, 2024 in the share market," said CITU general secretary Tapan Sen.

AITUC general secretary Amarjeet Kaur said the market gambling in the UPS will continue, claiming that the Centre wants to invest the ₹6 lakh crore accumulated with the NPS Fund in the market.

INBRIEF

Bihar polls: Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj to contest all seats

Election strategist-cum- activist Prashant Kishor on Sunday said his political organisation Jan Suraaj would contest all 243 Assembly seats in Bihar. Elections will be held in Bihar in October-November 2025. He said women candidates would be fielded in at least 40 seats. Mr. Kishor is currently on a padayatra across Bihar which he kicked off from west Champaran on October 2, 2022. Since then, he has covered over 5,000 km through several districts of Bihar. Earlier, Mr. Kishor announced that Jan Suraaj will become a political party on October 2 and it will have a 25-member central committee.

Mayawati rules out future poll alliances with Congress, SP

BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday took a dig at the Congress' "Samvidhan Samman Sammelan" and urged people to be cautious of the "double standards" of the party and its ally the Samajwadi Party. She also made it clear that her party would not form any alliance with the likes of the Samajwadi Party and the Congress in any election. In a series of posts on X, the BSP chief blasted the Congress for "not honouring" B.R. Ambedkar with the Bharat Ratna. The followers of Ambedkar will never forgive the Congress, which organised the Sammelan in Prayagraj, for not conferring the architect of the Constitution with the Bharat Ratna, she said. "Be cautious of their double standards of thinking, behaviour and character," she said. PTI

With Unified Pension Scheme, BJP-led govt. seeks to pull out a plank of the Opposition

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

> UPS ensures dignity and financial security for govt. employees, aligning with our commitment to their well-being and a secure future
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have repeated most of his Ministers from his previous term, but some policy prescriptions in his third term show departures, a signal that he has taken political lessons from the Opposition's Lok Sabha campaign to heart.

On Saturday, the Union Cabinet cleared the Unified Pension Scheme for Union government employees.

With this, the government hopes to pull out at least one plank of the Opposition, especially of the Congress, which had promised to implement the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), which promises a fixed amount of pension that is not dependent on market forces. The promise to implement the OPS had been a major plank for the Congress in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly election, which it went on to win.

The BJP has been resisting the OPS as it would, according to the party, reverse the process of pension reforms, with high costs to tax payers. With the UPS for Central government employees, the National Democratic Alliance government has tried to address the core demands of employees, with fewer demands on the exchequer, as the UPS is contributory as well.

Mr. Modi, who met with the unions representing government employees, said his government's move reflected its commitment to a secure future for government employees. "The Unified Pension Scheme ensures dignity and financial security for government employees, aligning with our commitment to their well-being and a secure future," the Prime Minister said on the social media platform X.

Beneficiary base

The move will help 23 lakh Central government employees. "With State polls coming up in Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, all political parties will have to address the issue of pensions in their campaigns, whether or not, if they come to power, they will implement it," a source in the government said. If States sign on to the UPS, the beneficiary base will explode to nearly 90 lakh people.

The decision by the PM and the Union Cabinet to not implement a creamy layer classification for reservations for Scheduled Castes after a Supreme Court verdict on sub-classifications of SCs, and the decision on the UPS are being seen as steps by the BJP to trip more Opposition planks. Therefore, while Mr. Modi has been projecting continuity from his second to his third term, in operative terms, that is not quite the case with the UPS, after arguing for the market-linked New Pension Scheme in the past.

Gang rape of girl in Assam triggers a war of words

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Seething rage: Local people staging a protest against the gang rape of a minor girl at Dhing in Nagaon district on Saturday. ANI

The gang rape of a 14-year-old girl at Dhing in central Assam on August 22 has triggered a war of words between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Opposition Congress.

Taking to social media platform X on Saturday, the State BJP accused the Congress of jumping to the defence of the rape accused, who the police claimed had drowned after jumping into a pond in a bid to escape from police custody. The accused, Taijul, alias Tafazzul Ali, was in handcuffs.

"So, is it true that INCAssam is rolling out the red carpet, mobilizing every corner of its vast ecosystem and loyal supporters, to defend their 'star' of the Dhing incident who finally faced the music today? Must be because he hails from a particular community, right?" the BJP's post read.

"Assam is just dying to know – because, clearly, such a 'worthy cause' deserves nothing less than a well-oiled, covert operation funded by the highest levels, right?" the party asked with screenshots of posts by some presspersons on predicting an "encounter" on Friday.

The BJP also posted screenshots of comments by some journalists against "encounters" of people accused of crimes in Assam without a trial.

The Assam Congress countered by posting: "Nothing better was expected from @BJP4Assam than to communalise even rape & murder. To suppress voice of people you've started targeting journalists too. SHAMEFUL!"

The party said its stand has always been clear "be it in Dhing, Lakhimpur, Hathras, Unnao, molestation of women wrestlers, rape & murder of doctor in Kolkata or garlanding of rapists & murderers of Bilkis Bano".

"INC condemns every incident with equal fervour & doesn't shy away from selective criticism. Every perpetrator irrespective of caste, creed & religion must be apprehended & punished by law," the Congress said, slamming the BJP for being "influenced" by an "aberrant" Chief Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma.

At Ranchi meet, Chirag re-elected LJP(RV) chief

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Union Minister Chirag Paswan was on Sunday re-elected president of the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) for a five-year term. The decision was taken unanimously during the national executive meeting of party in Ranchi.

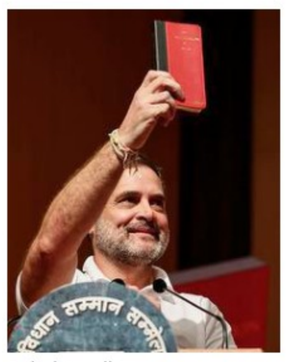
Mr. Paswan said the party was willing to contest the Assembly election in Jharkhand to strengthen its support base in the tribal-dominated State. Another National Democratic Alliance partner, the Janata Dal(U), has also said it wants to contest 11 seats in Jharkhand as part of the alliance.

Mr. Paswan said that the State units would take the final call on whether to contest the election as part of an alliance or independently.

Congress to continue to frame social justice as centrepiece of its politics

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI


Rahul Gandhi

The Narendra Modi government quickly scrapped a proposal to induct mid-level officials into the bureaucracy through lateral entry to counter the Opposition's allegations of "ending reservations". However, it is clear that the Congress will continue to place social justice as the centrepiece of its politics.

On Saturday, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi positioned caste census as an essential step of a policy framework that ensures justice.

"For the Congress, the caste census is the foundation of policy making. It is a tool for policy making," he said in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Gandhi is now pushing to end the 50% ceiling barrier for reservations, along with his pitch for a socio-economic survey of different communities. "Neither the caste census nor an economic survey or an institutional survey can be prevented and the 50% barrier will also fall. All of these will happen," he said.

The party has also launched a 100-day "Samvidhan Rakshak Campaign" to enrol volunteers to protect the Constitution. But beyond the stated objective, the political goal is to portray the BJP as anti-reservation that would affect the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.

Centre's rollback

Aware of the potential damage, the Union government not only quickly rolled back the proposed lateral entry hiring but also extended the provision of reservations to the lateral entry route.

Even during her address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day, President Droupadi Murmu stressed social justice.

"Social justice is a top priority of the government, and it has taken several unprecedented initiatives for the welfare of SCs, STs, and other marginalised sections of society," she said.

The statement not only reflected the Union government's priorities but was also an acknowledgment of the political challenge mounted by the Opposition.

In a post on X on August 19, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge targeted the government's disinvestment and outsourcing policies.

He alleged that 5.1 lakh posts from public sector undertakings (PSUs) had been eliminated in the past 10 years due to the BJP government's disinvestment policy and casual and contractual recruitment had increased by 91%.

"The SC, ST, OBC, and EWS posts will now be given to people of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). This is the BJP's 'Chakravyuh' to change the Constitution by snatching reservations," Mr. Kharge had alleged.

Government of Karnataka
DEPARTMENT OF MINES & GEOLOGY
#49, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560001
E-mail: dir-mines@karnataka.gov.in

No. DMG/MLS/Auction/2024-25 Dated: 26.08.2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Department of Mines and Geology is calling tender for auction of old stock lying in the expired / cancelled mining leases and cancelled stockyards under various notifications through MSTC.

Eligibility conditions, terms and conditions, date and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Separate Lot wise auction notifications are published in MSTC portal. Tender Documents, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process of respective lots shall be available in electronic form only at the website of MSTC Ltd.

https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/aucsearch/search.jsp

The auction of old stock for each lot is "AS IS WHERE IS AND NO COMPLAINT BASIS". The interested bidders shall ascertain the quantity and quality of the Iron/Manganese ore before participation. The Department is not responsible for any dispute arising after confirmation of the bid.

Interested bidders may visit the MSTC Ltd website.

Sd/-
Director,
Department of Mines & Geology

DIPR/CP/1651/Zen/2024-25

INBRIEF

Warship *INS Mumbai* to make first visit to Sri Lanka today

The Indian Naval Ship (INS) *Mumbai* will arrive at the port of Colombo on Monday for a three-day visit to Sri Lanka, the Indian High Commission in Colombo has said. *INS Mumbai*, the Indian Navy's frontline warship, will be received ceremonially by the Sri Lankan Navy, the High Commission said in a press release on Saturday. "This is *INS Mumbai's* first visit to Sri Lanka and will be the eighth port call by Indian Ships this year," it said. The ship will bring essential spares for the Sri Lankan Airforce-operated Dornier maritime patrol aircraft, the pilots and flight navigators of which are being trained by the Indian Navy. Apart from this, the Indian Navy also supports the aircraft's maintenance with a technical team and spares. PTI

ONGC opens well in KG field to raise oil production

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation on Sunday said it has opened another well on its flagship deep-sea project in Krishna Godavari basin in Bay of Bengal, which will help augment production of crude oil and natural gas. In January, ONGC started producing oil, which is converted into fuels such as petrol and diesel in refineries, from the KG-DWN-98/2 or KG-D5 block. "On August 24, 2024, ONGC marked a significant milestone by starting production from its fifth oil well in the Block KG-DWN-98/2 Cluster-2 asset," the firm said in a stock exchange filing on Sunday. It did not state how much the new well was producing. With this, ONGC also successfully commissioned its gas export line from the offshore-to-onshore terminal. PTI

Tax demands over non-linked PANs leave firms in tight spot

Employers receive I-T notices for short deduction of taxes on income of staff who had not linked PAN with Aadhaar before May 31; many grievances have been raised over the issue, say experts

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The Revenue Department, this April, had said PANs will become inoperative if not linked with Aadhaar by May 31. GETTY IMAGES

Many employers are in a fix over demand notices from the Income Tax (I-T) Department for short deduction of tax on the income of employees who had not complied with a May 31 deadline to link their PAN and Aadhaar numbers, with some firms reporting tax demands even for workers earning less than the taxable income threshold.

The Revenue Departmen in April had said that PANs will become inoperative if not linked with Aadhaar by May 31, necessitating tax deductions to be made at a higher rate, and refunds being withheld. This marked an extension from a similar directive last year that these consequences of inoperative non-Aadhaar linked PANs were to kick in from July 1, 2023.

75 crore PANs issued

As of March 31, 2024, the department had issued about 75 crore PANs or Permanent Account Numbers. By January this year, a little under 11.5 crore PANs were yet to be linked to Aadhaar.

"While the language of the circular is clear that such higher rate is applicable only in cases where tax is deductible, the tax authorities while processing the withholding tax returns have been applying higher rates even where the salary income is below the prescribed threshold," Anita Basrur, partner, at Sudit K. Parekh & Co. LLP told *The Hindu*.

"This is creating unnecessary issues for the companies as they have been reporting cases below the threshold limit merely for the purposes of issuing salary certificates [Form 16] to such employees," she noted.

Many companies are asking employees to link the PAN after receipt of the demand notices, and have been revising their withholding tax returns, but there is no clarity on the taxman's stance in such cases.

"It is seen that the tax authorities are not considering such cases and the demand still remains as payable since the linking is after the extended deadline. Many grievances have also been filed in cases where payments are below the prescribed threshold, and thus there is no requirement to withhold tax and the question of higher rate does not apply," she pointed out.

"While one may state that there is no loss to the companies since they may recover the amount from the employees, it will be difficult to recover the tax in cases where salary of the employees is below threshold or in cases where employees have left the organisation," Ms. Basrur said.

Queries to the Central Board of Direct Taxes on the issue had not elicited a response till the time of going to press.

Akhil Chandna, partner at Grant Thornton Bharat, suggested, "For financial year 2023-24, they should deposit the outstanding tax amount if the employee's PAN and Aadhaar remained unlinked after May. Thereafter, the employees should also claim the TDS [tax deduction at source] amount by filing or revising their tax return for 2023-24 subject to PAN-Aadhaar linkage".

Suresh Surana, a chartered accountant, said employers may receive notices for short deductions if they have deducted taxes at a rate lower than 20%, which would also be subject to interest and penal consequences. "Employers must verify that all employees have linked their PAN with Aadhaar to ensure accurate TDS and avoid such notices. Where employees had linked their PAN and Aadhaar on or before May 31, employers would not be liable for short deduction," he said.

However, linking PAN and Aadhaar subsequently may not impact these demand notices, Mr. Surana cautioned.

Large number of youth eager to join politics, says Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that a large number of youth in India were eager to enter politics but felt it was "inconceivable" for them as they lacked a political legacy.

In his monthly radio address *Mann Ki Baat*, Mr Modi said his call in his Independence Day speech to one lakh youth without any political background to join politics had "garnered tremendous response". "We thus come to know that a large number of our youth are eagerly ready to enter politics. All they are looking for is the right opportunity and apt guidance," he said.

"Some youth have also written that dynastic politics crushes new talent... I hope that now with our collective efforts, youth who do not possess a political background will also be able to come forward in politics... their experience and their fervour will prove useful for the country," the Prime Minister said.

Citing the example of the freedom struggle, he said during that period, many people without any political background had come forward, "They took the plunge for the sake of India's freedom. Once more, we require the same spirit to attain the goal of Viksit Bharat," he added.

Campaign on nutrition

Mr. Modi also urged people to connect with campaigns pertaining to awareness of nutrition. Mentioning the special 'mother and child' committees established under Anganwadi centres, he said they tracked malnourished children, pregnant women, and newborn babies. "A tiny effort on your part will help a lot in the fight against malnutrition," Mr. Modi said.

During the programme, he also spoke to young entrepreneurs, alumni of the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, and their space startup GalaxEye.

Human-animal bond

Mr. Modi spoke about Barekuri village in Assam, where people of the Moran community have a deep bond with Hoolock gibbons. "When they realised that gibbons love bananas a lot, they started growing bananas on their farms. Besides, they decided that they would perform rituals connected with the birth and death of gibbons exactly as they would have performed for their near and dear ones," he said.

He mentioned young people in Arunachal Pradesh who use 3D printing technology to protect wild animals from being hunted for horns and tusks.

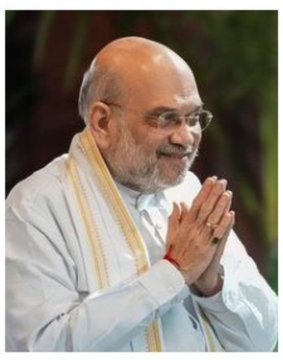
Drug money is endangering security and economy: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said consumption of contraband in Chhattisgarh was higher than the national average. He virtually inaugurated the zonal office of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) here.

Mr. Shah said the percentage use of sedatives in Chhattisgarh was 1.45, which was more than the national average and the use of cannabis (ganja) was also 4.98%, which was also more than the national average.

Reiterating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve of a drug-free India by 2047, the Home Minister said that apart from ruining the country's young generation, it weakened the country's national security and economy as the money earned from illicit drug trade promoted terrorism and left-wing extremism.


Amit Shah

NCB performance

On the action taken against drugs and the performance of the NCB in the past 10 years, Mr. Shah presented the comparative numbers between that period and the preceding decade. He said that from 2004 to 2014, a total of 1,250 cases were registered whereas in the 10 years from 2014 to 2024, 4,150 cases had been registered with a rise of 230%. Between 2004 and 2014, there were a total of 1,360 arrests, which had now risen to 6,300, he added.

On seizure volumes, too, he said 1.52 lakh kg of drugs was seized between 2004 and 2014 while 5.43 lakh kg was seized between 2014 and 2024, which was an increase of 257%.

The value of drugs seized between 2004 and 2014 was ₹5,900 crore, while the value of those seized between 2014 and 2024 was ₹22,000 crore, according to the Minister.

Classical language centres ask for autonomy

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Special centres set up for the promotion of Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia after they were designated classical languages are demanding autonomy in their functioning in order to better carry out their functions.

India has six classical languages – Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia. While four of the centres for classical languages function under the aegis of the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru, the centre for Tamil is autonomous. For the promotion of Sanskrit, dedicated universities also receive funds directly from the Union Education Ministry.

At a meeting on March 18, the project directors of the centres for Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia demanded that their institutes be made autonomous. Following this, the centres were asked to submit detailed project reports, which was done in June. However, no further direction has been received from the Education Ministry as of now, sources told *The Hindu*.

Once a language is notified as a classical language, the Education Ministry provides certain benefits to promote it, including two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in the said languages. A Centre of Excellence for Studies in the classical language is set up, and the University Grants Commission is requested to create a certain number of Chairs for the classical language at least in the Central Universities.

Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha in 2020, the Union government had said that in the previous three years, ₹643.84 crore had been spent on the promotion of Sanskrit, while ₹29 crore was spent on the other five classical Indian languages.

The Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada in Mysuru.

The sources said the chief problem facing these four language centres was that any event or activity planned for them had to get financial sanction from the CIIL. Most of the time, the centre has to hold the event first and then get the cost reimbursed from the CIIL, making it difficult to organise many such programmes.

This also means many positions for research scholars as well as administrative staff remain vacant in the absence of regular funds.

At the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, as against an approved staff requirement of 36 people, only 12 are on board.

Similarly, the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Odia in Bhubaneswar has the approval for 30 senior and associate fellows and 10 administrative staff, but has been able to hire only eight.

In 2023, the Education Ministry allocated ₹1.76 crore for the Odia centre but it could spend only ₹56 lakh.

"There is no funding in the centre and the Project Director has no financial drawing power – he has to take approval from the nodal officer, the Director, CIIL, and is constrained to spend from his own pocket to conduct any programme and then get it reimbursed from CIIL. This difficulty will be solved when the centre will be autonomous," a senior official at the Odia centre told *The Hindu*.

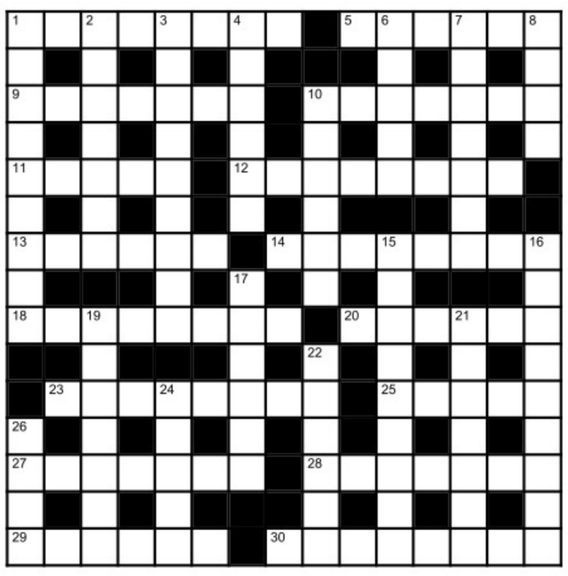
"I have been here for the past two years. We do not have any financial resources. Only two persons are here – myself, and a daily wage employee. There are several vacancies but none have been filled yet," the Project Director at the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Malayalam said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14263

(set by Gussalufz)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Setter's scheme of notes duplicated around (4-4)
5 Party beat (6)
9 Unbending at the core during cycling cuts control (7)
10 Skip toilet comprising a pit in disrepair (7)
11 A leafy vegetable, fish, and a bit of *daru* (5)
12 Q's successor, MI6 field agent, and M, in the middle of reviewing secure artillery stores (8)
13 Substitute gatekeeper sat zealously guarding (6)
14 Getting agitated, as centre brings back old laws (2-6)
18 Gather together in pure lust, horsing around (6,2)
20 Am attached to a kind of sex that is sinful (6)
23 Today is Monday, day to go back to pleasing your boss? (8)
25 Stop, that hurts! Leave! (5)
27 Press out of control — essentially impudent, chasing old lover (7)
28 Request a slice of toast after short meal course (7)
29 What a search engine did with the web, blowing a kiss, undoubtedly (6)
30 Regressively old-fashioned, according to correspondent (8)

Down

1 Consequence of cruel punishment at cage-free chicken farm (1,5,3)
2 Doctor wary after A.I. ultimately reconfigures respiratory tracts (7)
3 Extremely erotic spot in/around the bottom, according to hearsay (9)
4 Character building is talked about, but only a little (2,4)
6 Cool river for beast (5)
7 Weak ministry with nincompoop at the top, controlled by spies from the south (7)
8 Back North Indian language for 80% (4)
10 College entrance test after consuming (only a third) rice porridge (6)
15 Um... bro went off for a call (6,3)
16 Is a lit waiter dumping everyone in the sea? (4,5)
17 In vain, some label it "UFO" when seen heading skywards (6)
19 Remarkably inspired rodents at work (7)
21 Studied encounter in song with lamb, possibly (3,4)
22 Victim: pedestrian, somewhat slow (6)
24 Does uncle regularly sport tie? (5)
26 By now, Gussalufz is a legend (4)

SUDOKU

						1	2	
				9	1		5	
1	3	4				8		
8		7		1				
			9		2			
				6		3		9
		2				7	3	6
	1		3	2				
	7	5						

No.SS6262 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution toprevious puzzle

Q	U	A	R	R	Y	E	T	C
U	L	O	■	■	H	I	U	■
I	L	L	U	S	E	P	E	R
D	H	E	■	■	B	A	S	P
■	P	A	R	T	N	E	R	I
■	■	I	T	N	T	K	N	N
C	O	L	L	E	A	G	U	E
U	■	■	S	R	R	T	■	■
T	A	H	R	■	B	A	M	B
A	■	A	S	F	I	M	E	■
C	O	N	S	T	I	T	U	T
R	■	D	O	M	■	■	R	K
O	N	S	C	R	E	E	N	■
S	■	E	E	N	■	■	O	E
S	O	L	I	D	I	T	Y	■

I	N	G	S	■	■	■	■	■
U	■	U	■	■	■	■	■	■
R	E	S	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	P	■	■	■	■	■	■
I	M	E	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	N	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	G	E	D	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	■
Z	L	E	D	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	L	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
K	■	H	■	■	■	■	■	■
A	■	A	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	7	2	4	6	3	1	8
3	1	2	9	8	7	5	4	6
8	6	4	1	5	3	2	9	7
7	3	8	6	1	2	9	5	4
1	5	6	8	9	4	7	2	3
4	2	9	3	7	5	6	8	1
2	7	1	4	3	9	8	6	5
9	4	5	7	6	8	1	3	2
6	8	3	5	2	1	4	7	9

FAITH

The birth of Lord Krishna

The Supreme Being manifested on earth many times, it is His avatar as Rama and Krishna that are hailed as purna, punniya avatar as there was a stated purpose in each, said Damal S. Ramakrishnan in a discourse. In Rama avatar He manifested to show how to lead a life of dharma. The purpose of Krishna avatar was to establish dharma and rid the earth of adharmic forces.

Upon Earth's supplication to Brahma on the atrocities of the asuras on earth, he informed Her and the devas, "Bhagavan will be born on earth in the house of Vasudeva. " He also ensures Vasudeva and Devaki, sister of the asura Kamsa, are married. When the newly weds leave for Vasudeva's place, Kamsa himself drives the chariot. However, an ethereal voice tells Kamsa that the eighth issue of Devaki would kill him. When Kamsa draws his sword to kill her, Vasudeva diplomatically offers a sacrifice whereby he will handover his newborns to Kamsa. Devaki delivers the eighth child, Mahavishnu, when Rohini star was ascendant, and stars shone clear in the sky and the couple is blessed with His sight: Lotus-eyed, four-armed, sporting the conch, mace and other weapons; with the luminous Srivatsa mark on the chest and the Kaustubha on his neck; wearing a yellow silk cloth, bedecked with splendorous ornaments.

Port to own plan from group plan

PORTABLEPLAN

Siddharth Singhal

It is common practice for banks to collaborate with insurers to offer group health insurance at discounted rate. While the economic benefit draws the buyers they do not come without potential downsides. In the event of a bank merger, there is no assurance the acquiring bank will continue its partnership with the current insurer. Moreover, such plans come with room-rent caps, sub-limits. Insurers can terminate the group plan midway, leaving customers without coverage and exposing them to risks.

IRDAI has recently addressed this issue. Recently, norms were issued to port from group to individual retail coverage. This ensures personalised and flexible approach to one's health insurance needs.

Retail plans best bet

Retail individual health policies offer several advantages compared with bank-based plans. With lifetime renewability, they ensure continuous coverage. They generally include fewer sub-limits, offer more coverage for various medical expenses. They allow room for personalisation, letting you adjust the coverage to better match specific needs. Also, the plans include add-ons such as consumables, OPD and reduced waiting period for pre-existing disease.

Following the update, consumers are showing a gradual shift towards personal policies. Of the total health insurance customers porting policies, 15% are now opting to switch from bank-based to retail individual plans, as per our insights. With these norms, the IRDAI empowered consumers by providing them with greater flexibility and control over health policies.

When choosing a new policy, evaluate specific health needs and those of family, including any chronic conditions or regular medications. Pay attention to deductibles, co-payments and coverage limits to understand potential out-of-pocket expenses. Make sure preferred healthcare providers are included in the plan's network and prescription medications covered. Verify the plan offers adequate preventive care and emergency services. Also, research the insurer's customer service and be aware of policy exclusions.

Porting process

Under portability, policyholders can change insurer or plan by following the IRDAI's standard procedures. You need to request portability at least 45 days before the current policy expires. The new insurer will then provide you forms and offer details on plans. Pick the plan and submit documents. The insurer will review your information, including previous claims and medical records. Based on this, the insurer will decide on portability request, with a decision timeframe of 15 days.

Portability enables you to switch insurers or plans while retaining the benefits accumulated under your current policy, making the transition smooth and hassle-free. This allows you to change insurer without losing continuity benefits, such as waiting periods and other advantages.

This is particularly advantageous if you need urgent and costly medical care during the transition. Without portability, opting for a new policy might leave you without coverage for an initial waiting period.

Transitioning from a bank-based group policy to an individual retail policy offers significant advantages, including greater flexibility, comprehensive coverage and the ability to retain accumulated benefits. IRDAI's recent guidelines facilitate this process, empowering clients to make more informed choices about health insurance. By evaluating specific needs and carefully considering terms of potential new policies, you can ensure continuous coverage and avoid potential gaps. Embracing changes allows for a more tailored experience, providing peace of mind and security in managing health care needs.

(The writer is Head, Health Insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Body blow: An example of how things can go wrong is the 2000s dot-com bubble, which corrected by 75%..GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

High risk and high reward bets can be a losing strategy

When an investor decides to opt for a high-risk, high-reward strategy, they inherently undertake such a gamble where they face heavy downside risk while trying to chase large winners.

VALUE INVESTING

Anand Srinivasan
Sashwath Swaminathan

Almost every investor aspires to outperform the market and peers by a significant margin.

When asked how they plan to achieve this, they often vaguely reference the strategy of picking big winners in the stock market, aiming at substantial returns. In theory, this approach is hard to refute – after all, selecting large winners should, all else being equal, set one's portfolio apart from the market.

However, as the famous baseball player Yogi Berra once said, "In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice, there is."

To uncover the limitations of aggressively chasing big winners, we must first examine a mathematical phenomenon that challenges this strategy

Coin toss

Let us view the example of Professor Ole Peter's simple coin toss. Suppose once you flip a coin and if it is heads you gain 50% more or if it is tails you lose 40%. If you started with ₹100, most of us would take the bet because it seems favourably skewed.

We assume that if we take the bet enough times, we will turn a tidy profit for the day. However, the key distinction here is that if you were to take the bet

> Investing in firms trading well below intrinsic value, with low PE ratios and minimal debt, offers a safer route to outperform in the long run vis-a-vis volatile market favourites

suppose 100 times, the expected value of your net worth would be close to ₹0. The reason is if you were to win the first toss and gain ₹50 and lose the second toss, your net worth would already be at ₹90, and suppose you were to lose the first toss and win the second toss, your net worth would be at ₹90 as well. If you repeated this game for 10 tosses and won five of them and lost five of them, your expected net worth would be ₹59.

Losing more

Therefore, the more bets you take as you will be expected to have an equal number of heads and tails, you will stand to lose much more than you gain. The reason is that if you were to lose 40% of your principal, it would take roughly a 67% increase to make back the losses and become whole. If 10 individuals took this gamble at the same time once, a large portion of them would have positive results.

However, it is guaranteed as they progress, all of them will finally end up with negative returns. Similarly, when in the markets when an investor decides to opt for a high-risk, high-reward strategy, they inherently undertake such a gamble where they have heavy downside risk while trying to chase large winners. In some cases, this pays off, with those investors raking in large gains and outperforming the market exceptionally as evidenced by those who rode the AI stock boom in the U.S. Another way in which the bet morphs into high risk and high reward involves the use of leverage in their portfolios.

> By avoiding huge losses from downturns, you position yourself for long-term outperformance, outlasting those who fail to account for downside risk

'Disastrous leverage'

When an investor takes multiple bets in this same fashion in the stock market, one bad coin toss, or in our case stock pick (sometimes with leverage involved) ends up with disastrous losses leading them to never be able to recoup their losses.

These individuals end up underperforming even those who had parked their investments in risk-free assets such as treasury bills. An example of how things can go wrong is the 2000s dot-com bubble, which corrected by 75%.

It took 15 years for those who bought the NASDAQ during the peak of the bubble to recoup their losses. Their portfolios would have had to go up by 300% from the bottom-most point for them to have been made whole.

Bigger risks

Additionally, those who seek to recoup their losses typically continue to take on larger and more aggressive bets with even greater downside risks.

Taking on greater risk only magnifies the phenomenon creating an accelerated cycle to financial ruin.

Value investing

In contrast, value investing prioritises controlling downside risk over chasing upside gains.

As the renowned investor Warren Buffett wisely advised, "The first rule of investing is to not lose money, and rule number two is to never forget rule number one."

By avoiding catastrophic losses during downturns, you position yourself for long-term outperformance, outlasting those who fail to account for downside risk. Investing in companies trading well below their intrinsic value, with low price-to-earnings ratios and minimal debt, offers a safer route to outperform in the long run, compared to the volatile nature of market favourites that can swiftly fall out of favour.

(Anand Srinivasan is a consultant. Sashwath Swaminathan is a research assistant at Aionion Investment Services.)

Decode new age risk in investments

THINKINVESTOR

You should have the conviction that regulatory policies are in place to address the issues and moderate these new-age risks (technology risks) associated with your investments

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

The recent natural disasters across the world has brought climate risk to the fore. This has also caused concern among some about overly investing in physical assets. In this article, we discuss the new-age risk associated with physical and financial assets.

Climate and technology

All investments are exposed to some risk. Investment in bank deposits runs inflation, credit and reinvestment risk. Inflation risk is the risk price levels in the economy may be higher in the future than today. So, the post-tax maturity value of your deposit may not buy products that you want to in the future because prices have increased more than you expected. Equity investments run market risk – the risk the value will slide in the future. These are some traditional risks linked to financial investments.

Physical investments such as house property and gold are exposed to the risk of theft; someone could steal your physical gold or wrongfully acquire ownership of property. In recent times, the risk associated with physical investment extends to natural disasters. A house property located near the sea, for instance, has a high risk of being impacted by a tsunami or a cyclone. Add to this, the high geopolitical risk in some countries and you may wonder if investing in physical assets are optimal. But it is not that financial assets are protected from new-age risk.

Technology has facilitated rapid growth in modern-day markets. You can set up systematic investment plan through the time horizon for life goals. This eases the pressure of having to remember to make the investment every month. Importantly, SIP moderates the regret of investing as it distances you from the investing decision. But you are exposed to technology risk viz. technology glitches can hit investment records.

Conclusion

There are risks you can moderate. You can reduce credit risk by investing in large banks. You can moderate market risk by determining the appropriate equity allocation. But you cannot easily moderate climate/ technology risks. Both these new-age risks are yet known unknowns. You understand the risks exist, but may not know if and how a technology or a climate-related event will happen that can impact investments. You should have conviction that regulatory policies are in place to address the issues and moderate these new-age risks (especially technology risk) associated with your investments.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years — Loan amount 1 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.75 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Up to Rs 4,999
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5.5%
State Bank of India	11.35-15.50	10,959-12,027	2,192-2,405	1.50%(Min Rs 1,000 to Max Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.85 onwards	10,834 onwards	2,167 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda	11.15-18.75	10,909-12,902	2,182-2,580	Up to 2% (Min Rs 1,000 Max Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	11.25 onwards	10,934 onwards	2,187 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3%
Bank of India	10.85-14.85	10,834-11,856	2,167-2,371	0.50%-1% (Min Rs 250 Max Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.95-16.40	10,859-12,266	2,172-2,453	0.50% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.40-17.95	10,772-12,683	2,144-2,537	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.99-15.00	10,621-11,895	2,124-2,379	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.49 onwards	10,994 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	11.35-15.45	10,959-12,013	2,192-2,403	Up to 1% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	10.75-13.50	10,809-11,505	2,162-2,301	0.50%-1%
South Indian Bank	12.85-20.60	11,338-13,414	2,268-2,683	Up to 2%
UCO Bank	12.45-12.85	11,236-11,338	2,247-2,268	Up to 1% (Minimum Rs 750)
IDFC First Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.00-12.80	10,624-11,325	2,125-2,265	1% (Rs 1,000-Rs 10,000)
Karnataka Bank	13.43	11,487	2,297	Up to 2% of loan (Min. Rs 2,500 Max. Rs 8,500)
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	1.5% -3.5%

Car Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.70 - 10.45	10,307 - 10,735	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.75 - 10.60	10,319 - 10,772	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.95 - 12.70	10,367 - 11,300	Up to Rs 2,000
Canara Bank	8.70 - 12.70	10,307 - 11,300	0.25% (Maximum Rs 2,500)
Bank of India	8.85 - 10.85	10,343 - 10,834	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 5,000)
UCO Bank	8.45 - 10.55	10,246 - 10,759	Nil
State Bank of India	9.05-10.10	10,391-10,648	Up to Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.80 - 9.65	10,331 - 10,294	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.70 - 13.00	10,307 - 11,377	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank**	8.85 - 12.00	10,343 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	0.50% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.88 - 11.37	10,350 - 10,964	0.60% (Rs 3,000 - Rs 11,000)
Federal Bank	8.85 onwards	10,343 onwards	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
South Indian Bank	8.75 onwards	10,319 onwards	0.75% (Max: Rs 10,000)
IDFC First Bank	9.00 onwards	10,379 onwards	Up to Rs 10,000
City Union Bank	14.45 - 14.95	11,751 - 11,882	1.25% (Min: Rs 1,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799.

Rates and charges as on August 21 — **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

RAWALPINDI

12 pilgrims headed for Iran among 36 dead in Pakistan bus crashes

AFP

At least 36 people were killed in two separate bus accidents in Pakistan on Sunday, including 12 pilgrims who had been trying to reach Iran. Road accidents with high fatalities are common in Pakistan. On Saturday, the bodies of 28 pilgrims who died in a bus crash in Iran were returned to Pakistan. AFP

SOLINGEN

Syrian suspect has confessed to knife rampage: German police

REUTERS

The German police said on Sunday that a 26-year-old Syrian man has given himself up and confessed to killing three persons and wounding eight others in a knife rampage at a street festival. Four of the wounded are in a serious condition. German prosecutors said they had launched a "terrorist" investigation into the incident. AFP

KABUL

UN 'concerned' by Taliban's new morality law in Afghanistan

REUTERS

The UN mission in Afghanistan said on Sunday it was "concerned" about a morality law recently ratified by the Taliban regime, criticising in particular restrictions on women. The Taliban had announced the codification of a law with 35 articles detailing restrictions based on their strict interpretation of Islamic law. AFP

CAIRO

Efforts to restore ties with Turkiye have yielded no results, says Assad

AP

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said on Sunday that efforts to mend ties with Turkiye had so far brought no tangible results. "The initiatives did not yield any results despite the seriousness and genuine keenness of mediators," he said in a speech to parliament, referring to conciliation efforts by Russia, Iran and Iraq. AFP

Strikes in Lebanon 'not the final word', warns Netanyahu

Israeli PM says the military destroyed thousands of short-range rockets intended to harm civilians; media reports indicate that Hezbollah intended to strike Mossad headquarters near Tel Aviv

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Sunday's strikes in Lebanon were "not the final word" in his country's military campaign against Lebanese armed group Hezbollah.

"We are striking Hezbollah with surprising, crushing blows... This is another step towards changing the situation in the north and safely returning our residents to their homes. And, I repeat, this is not the final word," Mr. Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting.

He said the military destroyed thousands of "short-range rockets, all of which were intended to harm our civilians and forces in the Galilee".

Perils of war: A residential building that was damaged in Hezbollah's strike on northern Israel on Sunday. REUTERS

"Additionally, the IDF (Israeli military) intercepted all the drones that Hezbollah launched at a strategic target in central Israel," he said, without identifying what the target was.

Israeli media however reported the target Hezbollah aimed to strike was the headquarters of the Israeli Mossad spy agency near Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said the main target of his group was Glilot, "the main Israeli military intelligence base" near Tel Aviv.

Israel's military said there were "no hits" on that base. Israeli media reported that Glilot hosts the headquarters of the country's Mossad spy agency.

Israeli authorities declared a 48-hour state of emergency but later relaxed most of the restrictions. There was some disruption to flights in Israel and Lebanon.

China and Philippines clash in South China Sea yet again

Reuters
MANILA/BEIJING

The Philippines and China clashed in disputed waters of the South China Sea on Sunday over what Manila said was a resupply mission for fishermen, the latest in a series of sea and air confrontations in the strategic waterway.

The incident overshadows efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontations, including a violent clash in June where a Filipino sailor lost a finger.

The Philippines accused China of "aggressive and dangerous manoeuvres" to block the resupply mission, while China's coast guard said it had taken "control measures" against a vessel that had "illegally" entered the waters and repeatedly approached Chinese ships in a dangerous manner.

Flash point: A Chinese coast Guard ship colliding with a Philippine vessel near Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea on Sunday. AFP

Use of water cannons

In the incident near the Sabina Shoal, the Philippine South China Sea task force said Chinese vessels rammed and used water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship transporting food, fuel and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.

China asserts sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea. An international arbitral tribunal in 2016 ruled Beijing's claim had no basis under international law, a landmark victory for the Philippines, which filed the case..

China slams latest round of sanctions from U.S.

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China is "strongly dissatisfied" and "firmly opposed" to fresh U.S. sanctions on Chinese companies over ties to Russia's war in Ukraine, the Commerce Ministry said on Sunday.

"China urges the U.S. to immediately stop its wrong practices and will take measures to safeguard the interests of Chinese companies," a ministry spokesperson said.

Washington on Friday imposed sweeping sanctions against almost 400 individuals and companies it believes are aiding Russia's war in Ukraine. These include companies in China involved in shipping microelectronics and machine tools to Russia.

Telegram CEO held at Paris airport as Russia slams arrest

Associated Press
PARIS

The founder and CEO of the popular encrypted messaging service Telegram was detained at a Paris airport, French media reported Sunday.

Pavel Durov was detained at the Paris Le Bourget airport on Saturday evening after landing in France from Azerbaijan, according to broadcasters LCI and TF1.

French prosecutors declined to comment on Mr. Durov's arrest when contacted by The Associated Press on Sunday, in line with regulations during an ongoing investigation.

French media reported that Mr. Durov, 39, was the subject of an arrest warrant issued by France based on allegations that his encrypted platform has been used for money laundering, drug trafficking and allowing the sharing of content linked to sexual exploitation of minors.

Pavel Durov

Western governments have often criticised Telegram for lack of content moderating on the messaging service.

Russian government officials expressed outrage at Mr. Durov's arrest, with some highlighting what they said was the West's double standards on freedom of speech.

Harris campaign says it raised $540 million in just over a month

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

As the campaign enters the final 10 weeks, Trump has managed to raise $327 million

Kamala Harris's U.S. presidential campaign said on Sunday that it has raised more than half a billion dollars in just over a month, "a record for any campaign in history."

The eyewatering amount of $540 million, raised since Ms. Harris launched her campaign after President Joe Biden dropped out of the White House race on July 21 and endorsed her, comes as she and Republican rival Donald Trump embark on the final 10-week sprint to election day on November 5.

Mr. Trump, whose campaign was thrown when Mr. Biden stepped aside, reported having $327 million cash on hand at the start of August.

Just before Ms. Harris took to the stage at the DNC on Thursday to accept her party's nomination, "we officially crossed the $500 million mark," campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said in a memo.

"Immediately after her speech, we saw our best fundraising hour since launch day," she continued.

"In just over a month since we launched our campaign, Team Harris-Walz raised $540 million – a record for any campaign in history."

One-third of those donations were from first-time contributors, O'Malley Dillon said.

No one will be discriminated on the basis of their religion in Bangladesh, says Yunus

Kallol Bhattacherjee
DHAKA

Citizens of Bangladesh will not be discriminated against on the basis of their religion or political beliefs, Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, said on Sunday. Delivering a televised address ahead of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Mr. Yunus said his government would deliver on the promises made to the students and the common people who overthrew the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Gradual return: Bangladesh's metro railine in Dhaka resumed on Sunday more than a month after it was closed due to protests. AFP

"Religious minorities, and other marginalised communities are equal citizens of the 'new' Bangladesh and they will have equal rights," Mr. Yunus said.

Mr. Yunus also addressed for the first time the question of the tenure of the caretaker government and said that the caretaker dispensation will be in charge for as long as the people of Bangladesh want them to implement their agenda of a corruption-free governance.

"The date of the election will be decided through a political consultation. We will leave when people want us to leave," Mr. Yunus said indicating that the interim government will be around till a transparent election is held in the country.

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NO MEAN FEAT

Inspired Bangladesh secures first Test victory over Pakistan

AP

Bangladesh dismissed Pakistan for 146 in its second innings to set up a 10-wicket victory in Rawalpindi on Sunday. This was Bangladesh's first win over Pakistan in Test cricket. **The scores:** Pakistan 448/6 decl. & 146 in 55.5 overs (Rizwan 51, Mehidy 4/21) lost to Bangladesh 565 & 30/0 in 6.3 overs. **PoM:** Mushfiqur.

CHERISHED

Happy that this win will give Bangladesh a bit of a smile: Shanto

AFP

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hasan Shanto described his team's first Test win over Pakistan as a "special one". "It was a very important win for us because last month we had a difficult situation in Bangladesh. There are still some problems there but we support each other and I am happy this win gives them a little bit of a smile."

STEPPING IN

Hull replaces injured Wood in England squad for last two Tests

X@ENGLANDCRICKET

England's Mark Wood has been ruled out of the remainder of the Test series against Sri Lanka after scans confirmed a right thigh muscle strain, team management said on Sunday. Leicestershire's 20-year-old left-arm pacer Josh Hull has received his first senior call-up to replace Wood in the squad for the remaining two Tests.

AT THE HELM

Fatima named Pakistan skipper for Women's T20 World Cup

X@THEREALPCB

Fatima Sana has been named Pakistan captain, replacing Nida Dar, for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in UAE from Oct. 3 to 20. Nida is going through a lean patch and the team under her suffered T20I and ODI series defeats in England before making a semifinal exit in Women's Asia Cup. However, she has been retained in the squad.

Djokovic eyes a Slam record, Sinner faces doping fallout

The 37-year-old Serb can become oldest Open era champion and also pull clear of Court for most Majors won; Alcaraz would like to put the disappointment of the Olympics behind; women's champion Gauff has to contend with dip in form

US OPEN

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

Novak Djokovic, fuelled by an emotional Olympic triumph, has new Grand Slam records in his sights at the US Open, where title rival Jannik Sinner hopes to shake off a doping controversy.

Defending champion Djokovic can become the oldest Open era champion at the tournament if he secures a fifth title, a record he would share with Jimmy Connors, Pete Sampras and Roger Federer.

The 37-year-old would also move to 25 Grand Slam triumphs, taking him clear of the 24 he currently shares with Margaret Court.

Critical time

The final Slam of the year comes at a critical time for Djokovic. This year he was succeeded as Australian Open champion by Sinner who also relieved him of his world number one ranking.

Carlos Alcaraz took his French Open title with the Spanish crowd-pleaser then sweeping Djokovic off court in a one-sided Wimbledon final.

However, Djokovic, returned to the clay courts of Roland Garros to stun Alcaraz in the Olympic final in what he Saturday called "the greatest achievement and greatest highlight of my career overall, winning the gold for Serbia."

Sinner, meanwhile, arrives after an emotionally draining doping investigation, in which he escaped a lengthy ban after officials accepted his explanation that the banned substance entered his system as a result of contamination from a support team member.

Alcaraz, who won his first Major at the US Open in 2022, was badly bruised by his defeat to Djokovic in the Olympic final.

Defending women's champion Coco Gauff has endured a worrying dip in form in recent weeks, raising doubts over whether she could become the first woman since Serena Williams in 2014 to successfully defend her crown.

A stormy third-round exit from the Olympics was followed by early defeats in Toronto and Cincinnati.

Five-time Major winner and World No. 1 Iga Swiatek, the 2022 champion, made the Cincinnati semi-finals where she was defeated by Aryna Sabalenka.

Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion and runner-up to Gauff in New York last year, is another contender in a wide-open field that also features Wimbledon winner Barbora Krejcikova and Olympic gold medallist Zheng Qinwen.

On a high: Djokovic buoyed by his Olympic success would be keen to claim his first Major of the year. GETTY IMAGES

Top picks
Men: 2-Djokovic v Albot, 4-Zverev v Marterer, 6-Rublev v Seyboth Wild, Thiem v 13-Shelton
Women: 2-Sabalenka v Hon, 3-Gauff v Gracheva, 7-Zheng v Anisimova, 14-Keys v Siniakova

Chennai Lions wins needle clash against Dabang Delhi

UTT

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

In fine form: Sharath Kamal bought his A game to the table against Levenko. R. RAGU

After their losses in the opening ties the other day, Chennai Lions and Dabang Delhi were in no position to lower their guards. When the two teams took on each other at the Ultimate Table Tennis League here on Sunday, it was expected to be a no-holds barred fight.

And it largely turned out to be so. But it was the home side, which emerged triumphant as it defeated Dabang 8-7 to provide some joy to the spectators who had turned up in quite a large number.

Chennai relies on the energy and direction of its captain Sharath Kamal. The veteran paddler didn't disappoint as he brought his A-game to defeat Andreas Levenko by two games to one in the opening men's singles match.

When his backahand drives and forehand topspins work, Sharath is a delight to watch. It was one such day.

Sakura Mori of Chennai attacked relentlessly on both flanks to overcome Orawan Paranang 2-1 in the women's singles. Sharath then combined wonderfully well with Sakura to win the mixed doubles match against Sathiyan and Orawan 2-1.

Powerhouse

Sakura is a powerhouse of energy. More than Sharath, it was the Japanese player's consistency and accuracy that helped the team win.

Chennai's Jules Rolland versus Dabang's Sathiyan was going to be evenly matched given the attacking styles of the paddlers. Rolland prevailed 2-1 to get the requisite eight points for Chennai.

In the other tie, Jaipur Patriots scripted its first win of the season, outwitting U Mumba 9-6. Leading by seven points to 5, Jaipur needed just one point (one game) to close out the tie in the fifth and deciding match.

The results:

Chennai Lions bt Dabang Delhi 8-7 (Sharath Kamal bt Andreas Levenko 11-5, 11-8, 8-11; Sakura Mori bt Orawan Paranang 11-10, 11-8, 4-11; Sharath & Sakura bt Sathiyan & Paranang 11-6, 11-6, 9-11; Jules Rolland bt Sathiyan 11-7, 11-9, 8-11; Poymantee Baisya lost to Diya Chitale 9-11, 7-11, 5-11).

Jaipur Patriots bt U Mumba 9-6 (Cho Seungmin bt Quadri Aruna 11-9, 11-8, 11-5; Suthasini Sawettabut bt Maria Xiao 9-11, 11-5, 11-10; Cho & Nithyashree Mani lost to Manav & Xiao 11-4, 3-11, 9-11; S. F. R. Snehit lost to Manav Thakkar 2-11, 11-7, 11-8); Nithyashree bt Sutirtha Mukherjee 11-7, 11-8, 5-11).

Chelsea romps past a hapless Wolves

Hat-trick hero: Madueke scores Chelsea's fifth against Wolves. GETTY IMAGES

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Noni Madueke hit a hattrick as Chelsea crushed Wolves 6-2 to give Enzo Maresca his first Premier League win as Blues boss, while Newcastle rescued a controversial 1-1 draw at Bournemouth on Sunday.

Harry Kane dragged Bayern Munich to a come-from-behind 3-2 win at Wolfsburg on Sunday in new manager Vincent Kompany's Bundesliga debut.

Real beats Valladolid

Spanish champion Real Madrid earned a 3-0 win over Real Valladolid in the La Liga on Sunday as Kylian Mbappe made his Santiago Bernabeu bow without finding the net. The French striker played at home for the first time in a Madrid shirt but was largely frustrated by Valladolid's defence.

The results: Premier League: Bournemouth 1 (Tavernier 37) drew with Newcastle 1 (Gordon 76); Wolves 2 (Cunha 27, Larsen 45+6) lost to Chelsea 6 (Jackson 2, Palmer 45, Madueke 49, 58, 63, Felix 80); Liverpool 2 (Diaz 13, Salah 70) bt Brentford 0.
La Liga: Real Madrid 3 (Valverde 50, Diaz 88, Endrick 90+6) bt Real Valladolid 0.
Bundesliga: Wolfsburg 2 (Majer 47-pen, 55) lost to Bayern Munich 3 (Musiala 19, Kaminski 65-og, Gnabry 82).
Serie A: Fiorentina 0 drew with Venezia 0; Torino 2 (Ilic 31, Adams 50) bt Atalanta 1 (Retegui 26).
On Saturday: LaLiga: Barcelona 2 (Yamal 24, Lewandowski 75) bt Athletic Bilbao 1 (Sancet 42-pen); Espanyol 0 lost to Real Sociedad 1 (Kubo 80); Getafe 0 drew with Rayo Vallecano 0.
Serie A: Inter Milan 2 (Darmian 5, Calhanoglu 70-pen) bt Lecce 0; Monza 0 lost to Genoa 1 (Pinamonti 45+7).
Bundesliga: Borussia Dortmund 2 (Gittens 72, 90+3) bt Eintracht Frankfurt 0.

Flintoff and Knott bowl Australia-A to 45-run win

Press Trust of India
GOLD COAST

Incisive bowling by Tess Flintoff (three for 39) and Charli Knott (three for 34) helped Australia-A defeat India-A by 45 runs in the one-off women's Test here on Sunday.

Chasing 289, India-A was bundled out for 243 as it managed to add just 94 to its overnight score of 149 for six on day four.

The scores: Australia-A 212 and 260 in 92 overs bt India-A 184 and 243 in 92.5 overs (Shubha 45, Uma 47).

India u-17 football team goes down to Indonesia

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Levis Zangminlun's second-half strike was not enough as India lost to Indonesia 1-3 in the first of the two away under-17 football friendlies in Gianyar on Sunday. The hosts scored through Evandra Florasta (14th minute), Fandi Ahmad (50th) and Mierza Firjatullah (62nd).

Stalemate: Ajay Karthikeyan, right, held fourth seed Diptayan Ghosh. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Aronyak beats Arjun, moves to the sole second spot

NATIONAL CHESS

P.K. Ajith Kumar
GURUGRAM

Signing peace may have been the trend on the top boards on Sunday, but Aronyak Ghosh bucked it. And his win over Arjun Adireddy has made the closing stage of the National chess championship a bit more interesting as he brought down the lead of fellow-Kolkatan Surya Shekhar Ganguly to just half-a-point.

The top seed, who had to settle for a draw for a second successive day, is on eight points, with only two rounds to go. Aronyak is in the sole second position with 7.5 points.

They are followed on seven points by 13 players, including seeds third to fifth – S.P. Sethuraman, Diptayan Ghosh and Karthik Venkataraman.

The ninth-seeded Aronyak, who faced Slav Defence from his younger rival, won in 63 moves with his pawn poised for promotion.

On the first board, Sethuraman opted for an Italian Game against Ganguly. Both the seasoned GMs went on to find accurate moves nearly all the time and reached an equal ending featuring rook, knight and opposite-coloured bishops. They agreed to split the point on the 31st move.

On the second board, the impressive Ajay Karthikeyan held Diptayan after employing Semi-Slav Defence. The game was drawn in 23 moves following the repetition of the same position.

Important results (ninth round): S.P. Sethuraman (PSPB) 7 drew with Surya Shekhar Ganguly (PSPB) 8; Diptayan Ghosh (RSPB) 7 drew with Ajay Karthikeyan (TN) 7; M.R. Lalith Babu (AP) 7 drew with Karthik Venkataraman (AP) 7; Aronyak Ghosh (RSPB) 7.5 bt Arjun Adireddy (TS) 6.5; Sriram Jha (LIC) 7 drew with Himal Gusain (RSPB) 7; P. Iniyan (TN) 6 lost to Sammed Shete (Mah) 7; J. Deepan Chakravarthy (RSPB) 6.5 drew with Sankalp Gupta (Mah) 6.5; Mitrabha Guha (RSPB) 7 bt G. Akaash (TN) 6; N.R. Vignesh (RSPB) 6.5 drew with Neelotpal Das (PSPB) 6.5; Deep Sengupta (PSPB) 6 lost to S. Nitin (RSPB) 7; Neelash Saha (RSPB) 7 Viani D'cunha (Kar) 6; Uktal Sahoo (Odi) 7 C.R.G. Krishna (RSPB) 6; P. Shyaam Nikhil (RSPB) 7 bt B. Vignesh (TN) 6; S. Ravi Teja (AP) 6 drew with Swapnil Dhopade (Mah) 6.5; Abhijeet Gupta (PSPB) 6 bt Esshan Wadhawan (Del) 6.

Barter zooms to victory in second & third races

MOTORSPORTS

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Hugh Barter put the disappointment of the first day behind him as he romped home to victory in the second and third races of the opening round of the Formula 4 Indian Championship at the Madras International Circuit on Sunday.

The 18-year-old lost the first race on Saturday when a fuel pump issue forced his retirement on the final lap while comfortably in lead. The retirement put him 15th for the reverse-grid race-2 on Sunday.

However, Barter sliced through the field like a hot knife through butter, quickly picking off his rivals. The Aussie needed only 12 minutes to make up 14 places and take the lead when he passed Isaac Demellweek, who finished second.

The Indian duo of Divy Nandan and Veer Seth were involved in a tense battle for the final podium finish, but the former managed to keep his nose ahead and climb onto the rostrum.

In the final F4 race of the weekend, Barter cruised to another victory ahead of South African Aqil Alibhai and India's Ruhaan Alva, who took his second podium of the weekend in this category.

Joyful mood: Barter celebrates after his win in the second F4 race. M. VEDHAN

Meanwhile, in the IRL, Alister Yoong, son of former F1 driver Alex Yoong, dominated proceedings with a lights-to-flag win for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers. India's Akhil Rabindra took second ahead of Gabriela Jilkova.

The results (all race 25mins+1 lap): IRL Race-2: 1. Alister Yoong (Goa Aces JA Racing) 27m:15.226s; 2. Akhil Rabindra (Hyderabad Blackbirds) (27:19.810); 3. Gabriela Jilkova (Goa Aces JA Racing) (27:35.127).
F4 Indian: Race-2: 1. Hugh Barter (Godspeed Kochi) (27:06.573); 2. Isaac Demellweek (Chennai Turbo Riders) (27:25.297); 3. Divy Nandan (Ahmedabad Apex Racers) (27:29.102).
Race-3: 1. Barter (27:06.536); 2. Aqil Alibhai (Hyderabad Blackbirds) (27:10.134); 3. Ruhaan Alva (Shirachi Rarh Bengal Tigers) (27:11.549).

INBRIEF

Ingebrigtsen and Duplantis break world records

Norwegian Jakob Ingebrigtsen broke the 3,000m world record, while Olympic champion Armand Duplantis of Sweden improved his own pole vault world record by a centimetre, posting a mark of 6.26m, at the Silesia Diamond League meet in Poland on Sunday. Ingebrigtsen's time of seven minutes 17.55 seconds beat the long-standing record of 7:20.67 set by Kenya's Daniel Komen 1996. Avinash Sable finished 14th in the men's 3000m steeplechase with a timing of 8:29.96s.

Shuttler Tanvi Patri clinches Asian under-15 crown

India's Tanvi Patri clinched the under-15 girls' singles title at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships after she defeated Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen of Vietnam 22-20, 21-11 in Chengdu, China on Sunday.

India clinches silver at Asian surfing championships

The Indian team of P. Kamali, Ajeesh Ali, D. Srikanth and Sanjay Selvamani clinched the silver medal at the Maruhaba Cup, a team event in the Asian surfing championships at the Thulusdhoo Island, Maldives, on Sunday.

Medha Gupta's brace does it for Kemp

Medha Gupta scored twice, in the 50th minute and in injury time (90+1), as Kemp defeated Bengaluru FC 2-0 in the Karnataka Women's League football in Bengaluru on Sunday.

LIVE TELECAST

KSCA Maharaja T20 Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & FanCode, 3 & 7 p.m.

Durand Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 5.30 p.m.

Tennis: US Open, Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8.30 p.m. onwards

Brilliant Norris consigns Verstappen to his first-ever loss at home

The McLaren driver, who posted the second win of his career, cuts the championship lead to 70 points behind the Red Bull ace; Ferrari's Leclerc third

DUTCH GP

Reuters
ZANDVOORT

McLaren's Lando Norris ended Max Verstappen's unbeaten home record with a commanding Dutch Grand Prix victory and second win of his Formula One career to breathe new life into the championship on Sunday.

Red Bull's triple World Champion finished 22.896 seconds behind, after seizing the lead at the start but being passed on the 18th of 72 laps, with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc taking the chequered flag in third place.

It was the first time since the race returned to the calendar in 2021 that Verstappen had not triumphed at Zandvoort and extended his losing streak this season to five races.

His lead over Norris was cut to 70 points after 15 of a record 24 rounds, with McLaren also cutting Red Bull's increasingly vulnerable advantage in the constructors' championship to 30.

"It feels amazing. I wouldn't say a perfect race because of lap one again, but it was still beautiful. The pace was strong, the car was unbelievable," said Norris, who took his first win in Miami in May.

Tough but enjoyable

"I could push and get past Max. It was a straightforward race. Tough but enjoyable."

Norris had started on pole position for the fourth time in his career and Sunday's race on the breezy Dutch coast, in front of his rival's Orange Army of fans, was the first time he had converted the advantage into victory.

Great feeling! Norris holds aloft the winner's trophy as local hero Verstappen looks on. AP

It looked at the start that he might have thrown it away once again, the 24-year-old Briton making a sluggish start off the line as Verstappen hit the throttle and led decisively.

Norris also took a bonus point for fastest lap with a final flourish and was voted Driver of the Day by fans.

"You always hope to do better. We had a good start and tried everything we could but it was clear we were not quick enough," said Verstappen.

Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri was fourth, ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz with Red Bull's Sergio Perez sixth. The Mercedes pair of George Russell and Lewis Hamilton finished seventh and eighth with Alpine's Pierre Gasly ninth – and lapped – and Fernando Alonso taking the final point for Aston Martin.

The Results: 1. Norris (McLaren) 1h:30m:45.519s; 2. Verstappen (Red Bull) +22.896s; 3. Leclerc (Ferrari) +25.439; 4. Piastri (McLaren) +27.337; 5. Sainz (Ferrari) +32.137; 6. Perez (Red Bull) +39.542; 7. Russell (Mercedes) +44.617; 8. Hamilton (Mercedes) +49.599.

+1 lap: 9. Gasly (Alpine); 10. Alonso (Aston Martin); 11. Hulkenberg (Haas); 12. Ricciardo (RB); 13. Stroll (Aston Martin); 14. Albon (Williams); 15. Ocon (Alpine); 16. Sargeant (Williams); 17. Tsunoda (RB).

+2 laps: 18. Magnussen (Haas); 19. Bottas (Kick Sauber); 20. Zhou Guanyu (Kick Sauber)

Standings: Drivers: 1. Verstappen 295; 2. Norris 225; 3. Leclerc 192; 4. Piastri 179; 5. Sainz 172.

Constructors: 1. Red Bull Racing 434; 2. McLaren 404; 3. Ferrari 370; 4. Mercedes 276; 5. Aston Martin 74.

Natasha and Aanya register two wins

SNOOKER

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

India's Natasha Chethan notched up two wins in the group stage of the IBSF World under-21 women's snooker championship at KSBA here on Sunday.

Natasha, who won bronze in the previous edition of the tournament, took out fellow Indian Sameeksha Devan and Iran's Setayesh Amirazimi.

Natasha suffered an early setback against Setayesh, losing the first frame.

Bouncing back

Natasha climbed back into the contest in a close second frame, which went down to the black ball. Despite a couple of black ball fouls, Natasha was able to get the done in the decider.

Aanya Patel, another home favourite, also recorded two group stage wins. In the boys' under-17 event, Jabez Naveen Kumar sailed through his Group 'C' engagements undefeated.

The results: Under-21:

Natasha. K. MURALI KUMAR

Women: Chan Wai Lam (HK) bt Jiya Sehgal 72-21, 51-36; R.T. Mohitha bt Shadi Najafi (Irn) 71-18, 56-23; Natasha Chethan bt Setayesh Amirazimi (Irn) 50-77, 48-39, 64-34.

Sameeksha Devan bt Noot Albalawi (KSA) 25-6, 22-10; Aanya Patel bt Melika Najafi (Irn) 83-15, 66-41; Narucha Phoemphul (Tha) bt Manar Albalawi (KSA) 80-9, 43-34.

Setayesh Amirazimi bt Noot Albalawi 47-16, 34-8; Natasha Chethan bt Sameeksha Devan 67-25, 33-59, 73-23; Melika Najafi bt Manar Albalawi 53-43, 55-27; Aanya Patel bt Snenthra Babu 60-19, 59-16.

Under-17: Boys: Parham Kazemimoghaddam (Irn) bt Mutasim Al Saadi (Omn) 83-48, 9-70, 31-66, 67-14, 66-43; Jabez Naveen Kumar bt Benyamin Gazavand (Irn) 69-30, 72-37, 58-29; Sky Chan (HK) bt Rahul Williams 70-45, 68-22, 54-66, 76-65.

Mohun Bagan and Mumbai City to clash in season opener

ISL

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 season will begin with a blockbuster clash between Shield winner Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Cup winner Mumbai City FC in Kolkata on September 13 in a repeat of last season's final.

The ISL on Sunday announced the fixtures of the first 84 matches of the season, till the end of this year.

This season of the ISL will see 13 teams competing, with the addition of I-League champion Mohammedan Sporting Club.

With the entry of Mohammedan Sporting, the ISL will see the three most storied football clubs from Kolkata vying for the silverware.

Fans will witness six high-intensity Kolkata derbies through the season. The first two derbies are scheduled in October – Bagan vs Mohammedan on October 5 and East Bengal vs Bagan on October 19.

Blasters soars to the top with big win over Warriors

MAHARAJA TROPHY

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

L.R. Chethan starred with a quickfire 88 (53b, 9x4, 5x6) as Bengaluru Blasters recorded a thumping 56-run win over Mysore Warriors in the Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 tournament, at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, here on Sunday.

Warriors won the toss, and for much of the match were left ruing their decision to bowl first as Chethan's knock took the Blasters to 189 for seven. In reply, Mysore limped to 133 as Shubhang Hegde and M. Kranthikumar took three wickets each.

Superior NRR

The Blasters, with their fifth victory, soared to the top of the table with three matches remaining. They are equal on points with Hubli Tigers (10) but have a vastly superior NRR (+1.197 to -0.323).

Bengaluru missed the services of regular skipper Mayank Agarwal, and lost D. Nischal and Niranjan Naik early. But Shivkumar Rakshith (29, 28b, 2x4, 1x6) and Chethan combined for 72 third-wicket runs before the latter was involved in a 61-run association with Suraj Ahuja (32, 16b, 3x4, 2x6) for the fourth wicket.

Hammering away: Chethan uncorked nine boundaries and five sixes for Blasters.

Mysore, in contrast, had no such partnerships as it lost wickets at regular intervals.

The in-form Karun Nair failed to get going too (13, 12b, 2x4) as the Warriors slipped to their fourth loss of the competition and second on the trot.

Brief scores: Bengaluru Blasters 189 for seven in 20 overs (L.R. Chethan 88, Shivkumar Rakshith 29, Suraj Ahuja 32, C.A. Karthik 3/33) bt Mysore Warriors 133 in 17.5 overs (S.U. Karthik 26, Shubhang Hegde 3/28, M. Kranthikumar 3/18).

Mangalore Dragons 152 for seven in 20 overs (Nikin Jose 57) lost to Shivamogga Lions 153 for seven in 18.4 overs (Rohan Naveen 37, Abhinav Manohar 43).

It's Spanish Eyes vs. Villanelle in Deccan Fillies Championship Stakes

HYDERABAD: Spanish Eyes and Villanelle should fight out the finish of the Coromandel Gromor Deccan Fillies Championship Stakes, the chief event of Monday's (Aug. 26) races. There will be no false rails.

1 BELMONT PRINCE PLATE (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 1.20 p.m.: 1. Anemoi (1) P. Ajeeth K 56, 2. Country's Fire (7) A.A. Vikrant 56, 3. Exclusive Black (8) G. Naresh 56, 4. My Brother (4) Gaurav 56, 5. Sargent (10) Mukesh 56, 6. Talking Stick (3) P. Sai K 56, 7. Anahita (12) Ajay K 54.5, 8. Cape May (13) Afroz K 54.5, 9. Genie (6) R.S. Jodha 554.5, 10. High Heels (5) Arjun 54.5, 11. Lucky Fiero (11) Rafique Sk. 54.5, 12. Newfound Glory (2) Santosh Raj 54.5 and 13. Skyward (9) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5.

1. SARGENT, 2. ANEMOI, 3. TALKING STICK

2 NORTHERN DANCER PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 1.55: 1. Kingston (5) Md. Ekram 60, 2. N R I Superpower (4) Abhay Singh 58, 3. Lucky Zone (1) Ashad Asbar 57, 4. Icicle (2) Rafique Sk. 55.5, 5. Maverick (7) Likith Appu 54, 6. Malibu (8) Kuldeep Sr. 53.5, 7. Delhi Heights (3) Mohit 52.5 and 8. Sun Dancer (6) Afroz K 52.5.

1. LUCKY ZONE, 2. N R I SUPERPOWER, 3. MAVERICK

3 BHONGIR CUP (1,200m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.30: 1. Deccan Daisy (10) Ajay K 60, 2. Mikimoto (4) Kuldeep Sr. 59, 3. Pinatubo (9) A.A. Vikrant 58, 4. Assured Success (5) Surya Prakash 56, 5. Pancho (2) Shivansh 55, 6. Windsor (3) Afroz K 55, 7. Mr. Perfect (11) G. Naresh 53, 8. Exponent (1) Gaurav 52.5, 9. Lights On (6) R.S. Jodha 52.5, 10. Definite (7) P. Ajeeth K 52 and 11. Shivalik Model (8) Mohit 51.5.

1. MIKIMOTO, 2. PANCHO, 3. DECCAN DAISY

4 PAKHAL LAKE CUP (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.05: 1. Minecraft (3) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Australia (7) Arjun 59.5, 3. Reigning Beauty (9) Shivansh 59, 4. Decoy (5) C.S. Jodha 57.5, 5. Warwick (8) Ashad Asbar 56.5, 6. Encore (2) Md. Ekram 56, 7. Colt Pistol (4) Ajay K 54, 8. Hoping Sky (10) Mohit 54, 9. Deccan Spirit (6) Mukesh 53.5, 10. Miracle Mary (11) Vivek G 52 and 11. Kings Best (1) Santosh Raj 51.5.

1. DECOY, 2. MIRACLE MARY, 3. ENCORE

5 NORTHERN DANCER PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 3.40: 1. Last Wish (5) Sandesh 60, 2. Anzio (2) Antony Raj 57.5, 3. High Reward (9) R.S. Jodha 55.5, 4. D Minchu (3) Ajay K 54.5, 5. Miss Little Angel (6) Mukesh 54.5, 6. N R I Doublepower (7) Suraj Narredu 53.5, 7. Miss Marvellous (4) Afroz K 52, 8. Ruby Red (1) Neeraj 51.5 and 9. Indian Sniper (8) Likith Appu 51.

1. LAST WISH, 2. ANZIO, 3. N R I DOUBLEPOWER

6 COROMANDEL GROMOR DECCAN FILLIES CHAMPIONSHIP STAKES (Gr. 3) (1,600m) (Terms), Fillies 3-y-o only, 4.15: 1. Divine Art (7) Suraj Narredu 56, 2. Divine Prophecy (6) Vivek G 56, 3. Gloria (4) Antony Raj 56, 4. Magnetic (8) Akshay K 56, 5. Mother's Grace (3) C.S. Jodha 56, 6. Mountain Touch (5) Neeraj 56, 7. Spanish Eyes (1) Sandesh 56 and 8. Villanelle (2) C. Umesh 56.

1. SPANISH EYES, 2. VILLANELLE, 3. DIVINE ART

7 HYPERION PLATE (1,400m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 4.50: 1. Blue Brigade (12) Rafique Sk. 60, 2. Star Cruise (2) Abhay Singh 60, 3. Wandring Warrior (11) Kuldeep Sr. 60, 4. Dali's Champion (9) A.A. Vikrant 59.5, 5. Cash Register (4) Kuldeep Jr. 58, 6. Magical Power (8) Surya Prakash 58, 7. Soorya Vahan (6) M. Mark 58, 8. Battle On (1) Santosh Rah 57, 9. Fortune Art (3) G. Naresh 55.5, 10. Char Ek Char (10) Mukesh 54, 11. Pair Of Wings (7) Mohit 53.5 and 12. Politics (5) Arjun 50.5.

1. BATTLE ON, 2. CHAR EK CHAR, 3. CASH REGISTER

Day's Best: **LAST WISH**

Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.

Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

Tanala: All races.

Santissimo delivers in the HPSL Bangalore Summer Derby

BENGALURU: P. Shroff-trained Santissimo (S. Saqlain up) won the HPSL Bangalore Summer Derby, the stellar attraction of the races held on Sunday (Aug 25). The winner is owned by Gainsville Stud & Agrl Farm Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Gautam Lala, Mr. Kishore P. Rungta, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, Mr. Saleem Fazelbhoy & Mr. Achuthan Siddharth. Saqlain confidently kept his colt handy in third or fourth till the bend before manoeuvring the mount from the outside in the home stretch. Santissimo responded tremendously to the reminders and overtook the leader Excellent Lass in the last 150m to win comfortably.

THE RESULTS:

1. PRESS REPORTERS TROPHY: INFINITE SPIRIT (Faizan Khan) 1, Sling Shot (Koshi K) 2, Akasi (Arvind K) 3 and Pettes Love (Antony) 4. 1/2, 3/4 and Lnk. 1m, 14.36s. ₹180 (w), 38, 13 and 45 (p), SHP: 46, THP: 100, FP: 696, Q: 298, Trinella: 43,201, Exacta: 45,715. Favourite: Sling Shot. Owner and trainer: Mr. V. Lokanath.

2. TURF AUTHORITIES OF INDIA TROPHY: THE LEADER (Suraj) 1, Desert Goddess (Sandesh) 2, Star Honour (Vinod Shinde) 3 and Balmoral (Akshay K) 4. 1, 5-1/4 and 3/4. 1m, 38.02s. ₹12 (w), 10, 15 and 61 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 133, FP: 62, Q: 43, Trinella: 1,002, Exacta: 2,292. Favourite: The Leader. Owners: Mrs. Rajani & Mr. Rohit Raman. Trainer: Azhar Ali.

3. INDIAN PATTERN COMMITTEE TROPHY (DIV. II): PHOENOMENON (Akshay K) 1, Mehra (Darshan) 2, Rembrandt (Antony) 3 and Debonair (Vinod Shinde) 4. Not run: Immortal Beauty. 6-1/4, Hd and Lnk. 1m, 12.19s. ₹15 (w), 10, 14 and 14 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 45, FP: 41, Q: 37, Trinella: 137, Exacta: 1,096. Favourite: Phoenomenon. Owner: M/s. Rapar Galloping Stars LLP rep by Mr. Rajendran. Trainer: S. Dominic.

Champion colt: Owners Gautam P. Lala, Kishore Rungta, Joydeep Datta Guta, Achuthan Siddharth along with trainer P. Shroff, right, leading in Santissimo (S. Saqlain astride) after the the win in the HPSL Bangalore Summer Derby. K. MURALI KUMAR

4. MUMBAI CUP: JOHN WICK (S.J. Moulin) 1, Blue God (Antony) 2, Anadale (L.A. Rozario) 3 and Krystallos (Akshay K) 4. 5-3/4, Nk and 1-1/4. 1m, 23.73s. ₹74 (w), 18, 12 and 29 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 76, FP: 301, Q: 121, Trinella: 5,932, Exacta: 28,148. Favourite: Blue God. Owners: Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd, Mr. Kersi H. Vachha & Mrs. P.J. Vazifdar. Trainer: James McKeown.

5. HYDERABAD SALVER: AUGUST (Antony) 1, Constable (G. Vivek) 2, Magnus (Neeraj) 3 and Starkova (S.J. Moulin) 4. 1-1/4, 1/2 and 3-1/2. 1m, 49.51s. ₹95 (w), 23, 15 and 21 (p), SHP: 39, THP: 66, FP: 186, Q: 89, Trinella: 868, Exacta: 19,432. Favourite: Constable. Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing LLP, Mr. Haider Soomar, Mr. Chandrakanth Kankaria, Mr. Gautam Aggarwal, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta & Mr. Rajan Aggarwal. Trainer: Arjun Mangalorkar.

6. COROMANDEL GROMOR B.T.C. ANNIVERSARY CUP: ONCE YOU GO BLACK (S.J. Moulin) 1, Shamrock (Suraj) 2, Yukan (Akshay K) 3 and Iron Clad (Sai Kiran) 4. Not run: All Attractive. 1-1/4, 1-3/4 and 1-1/4. 1m, 23.00s (record time). ₹78 (w), 17, 10 and 13 (p), SHP: 48, THP: 37, FP: 218, Q: 36, Trinella: 412, Exacta: 2,508. Favourite: Shamrock. Owners: Diamond Band Rac Syn Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Shiven Surendranath, Mr. Kersi H. Vachha & Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd. Trainer: James Mckeown.

7. HPSL BANGALORE SUMMER DERBY: SANTISSIMO (GUSTO-BELDON HILL) S. SAQLAIN 1, Excellent Lass (Excellent Art-Remembrance Of You) Suraj 2, Positano (Arod-Satinette) Akshay K 3 and Victor Hugo (Ampere-Edith Piaf) L.A. Rozario 4. Not run: Duke Of Tuscany. 1, 1 and 4. 2m, 03.58s. ₹28 (w), 16, 13 and 21 (p), SHP: 37, THP: 44, FP: 74, Q: 35, Trinella: 350, Exacta: 16,422. Favourite: Santissimo. Owners: Gainsville Stud & Agrl Farm Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Gautam Lala, Mr. Kishore P. Rungta, Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta, Mr. Saleem Fazelbhoy & Mr. Achuthan Siddharth. Trainer: P. Shroff.

8. INDIAN PATTERN COMMITTEE TROPHY (DIV. I): LA MCQUEEN (Antony) 1, Magical Bay (Akshay K) 2, The Gallery Time (Sai Kiran) 3 and Fast Response (Koshi K) 4. Not run: Bold Act. Nose, Nk and 3-1/4. 1m, 12.88s. ₹23 (w), 12, 16 and 14 (p), SHP: 46, THP: 48, FP: 58, Q: 49, Trinella: 170, Exacta: 1,320. Favourite: La Mcqueen. Owner: Mr. Ganesan Subramanian. Trainer: Arjun Mangalorkar.

9. KOLKATA CUP: OWN LEGACY (Shreyas S) 1, Aquamatic (Akshay K) 2, Klimt (Sandesh) 3 and Ardakan (Neeraj) 4. Not run: All Attraction. Lnk, 1-3/4 and Nose. 1m, 25.58s. ₹500 (w), 66, 19 and 31 (p), SHP: 51, THP: 86, FP: 1,782, Q: 1,189, Trinella: 87,216 (carried over), Exacta: 97,369. Favourite: Kallu Sakkare. Owner: Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: S. Ganapathy.

Jackpot: ₹7,80,439 (carried over); Runner-up: 7,433 (45 tkts.); Treble (i): 260 (27 tkts); (ii): 14,315 (carried over); (iii): 4,494 (eight tkts.).